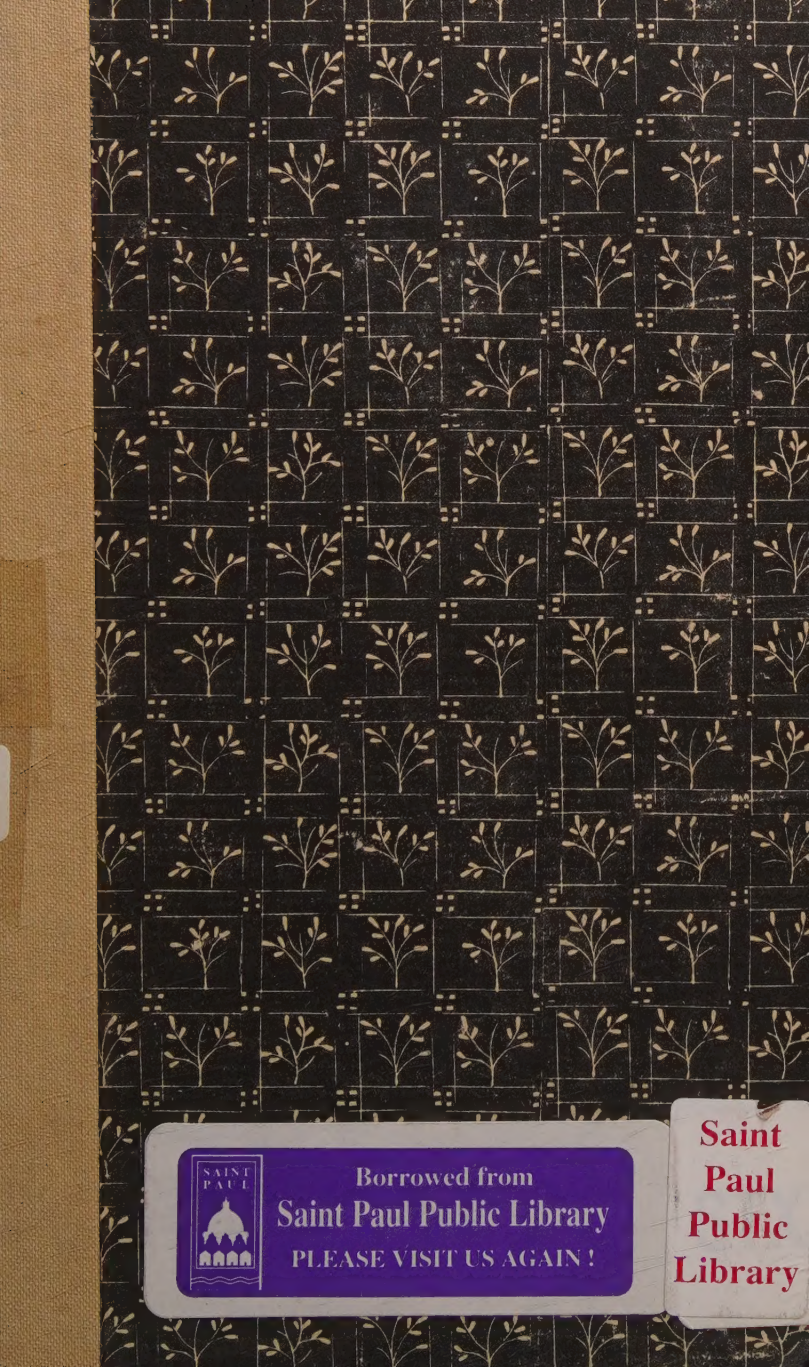
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THIS is a *pioneer* anthology, containi over two hundred very beautifu poems by some seventy living Scottish writers. The compiler—himself known as critic, poet and editor—attacks the assumptions that contemporary Scotland has no voice or idiom of her own in verse, and that her National Calvinism has stifled Art and Culture. No similar collection of poems has appeared. Comparatively few pieces in the Vernacular are included, but all are to be judged by a Scottish standard that differs from English as fundamentally and widely as the Irish or American. Among the contributors are Muriel Stuart, Rachel Annand Taylor, Marion Angus, Violet Jacob, Lady Margaret Sackville, Robert Crawford, Hugh M'Diarmid, Lewis Spence, Edwin Muir, Alex. Gray, Neil Munro, John Buchan, Lord Alfred Douglas, Pittendrigh Macgillivray, J. G. Horne, Alister Mackenzie, William Jeffrey, David Cleghorn Thomson, Hamish Maclaren, J. B. Salmond, A. M. Davidson, F. V. Branford, Hilton Brown, G. R. Malloch, Douglas Ainslie, James Guthrie and many younger poets; and the whole will reveal much that is radical to the indubitable growth of a Scottish National Movement and Renascence in recent years. The volume gives an epitome of human life as modern Scots have seen and sung it.

HOLYROOD

A GARLAND OF MODERN SCOTS POEMS

"We'll go to the Parthenon now," said Hagnon. "Some people say the carving is awfully old-fashioned; but I don't know—I like it." He kicked at a stone and blushed pleasantly. "I suppose I'm not old enough to know about beauty yet."

NAOMI MITCHISON, *Cloud Cuckoo Land.*

HOLYROOD

A GARLAND OF MODERN SCOTS POEMS

Chosen and Edited
with Introductory Essay by
W. H. HAMILTON

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To

R. L. MACKIE

Historian of Scotland

INTRODUCTION

THERE is a widespread belief that the Northern Muse has of late days been in a backwater and that romantic Scotland is dead and gone. Some Scots have used many pages to uphold this dismal creed, and others have endeavoured to evoke (but also, we have feared, to confine) a revival of song. A group has contended that only in her own Scots, or in Gaelic, may Scotland fitly speak; and Mr. Lewis Spence has used splendidly the old language of Dunbar and the Makars, while Mr. Hugh M'Diarmid, paladin of many gallant ventures, has aimed at the creation of a new "synthetic" Scots tongue, never actually written or spoken. By many it is agreed that the Scot has failed in English because it is for him a foreign speech, and that nothing at once vital and native has been done in that medium.

A too-ready acceptance of this estimate must be challenged. We hold that much first-rate Scottish verse has been written in English and yet remains Scottish, that the peril lies not in Englishry but only in the fashionable sophistication, that the Scottish use of English words is as distinctive and lovely as the Irish or the American, and that even this anthology —whose appeal is not limited to Scottish readers— proves so much. It is not yet the anthology of poems by living or recent Scottish authors of which we have

dreamed. It does not claim to represent every worthy Scots poet, on the one hand; nor, on the other, has its editor deemed it right to admit only that which is erudite, difficult, or perfect—although nothing is included that did not abidingly communicate to him the authentic poetic thrill. He has not wholly excluded simpler voices that have sung but little, and in that little have not banished music lest the song should be deemed old-fashioned or obvious. The poems have been chosen to fit the plan of the book—which is a little epitome of human life—and many of great beauty have therefore not found a place. Even on this limited plan, it would have been easy to make a much larger book. Perhaps a larger work may yet be done, as we have hoped; but even this little volume dares to claim with some dour pride that—to those with ears to hear—it proves that Scotland is still a land of noble songs, and these of many kinds and clans—clans not always courteous to one another, it may be granted, but in the conventionality or in the extravagance of their expression thoroughly national, and paying honourable common tribute to the loveliness that shall be loved for ever, and that none may monopolise or instruct.

. . . . .

From time to time in Scotland controversy breaks out between various schools of Art and Theology. A stock subject lately has been, Whether the long dominant Calvinism of the National Churches has not been inimical to Culture, and the newspapers and literary journals have been inundated with combative letters and essays. Many of these articles beg

a more fundamental question. Mr. Lewis Spence is a good poet and a self-confessed Calvinist owing all things to his creed. Lord Alfred Douglas is a devout and impassioned Roman Catholic; and Mrs. Rachel Annand Taylor has been largely moulded by Italianate and Catholic culture. But all are artists, and their work argues that the real question of controversy is whether the true basis for an interpretation of Life and the Universe and Religion is an ethical or an æsthetic basis.

In a world that had not gone astray, of course, Beauty and Goodness would be one—and one with Truth, or Science, as third of a Trinity. Meanwhile, things being as they are, it is not only possible but necessary for many — and some Presbyterians and Calvinists find ourselves among these—to understand the Divine first and last and always as Beauty; to think of God, and to worship Him, as Creative Artist rather than as Legislator or Judge; to discover His mind and His will through the Imagination and its expression in the Arts.

Now, imaginative Art claims—and must claim, or cease to exist—a splendid and audacious freedom which (if it were not, at its best, the most godlike thing in humanity) would amount almost to irresponsibility. It must claim this in language and symbol, idea and image and conduct. It cannot be but haughty, stringent, fiery, cleansing. Almost its most vital function is to cleave the soul of man asunder from all corruptions soever of contentment, and therefore it cannot long suffer anything to be regarded as established or perennially settled without protest, challenge, and vehement opposal. Its very

nature is to shatter every shibboleth "lest one good custom should corrupt the world"; and to foray and destroy mercilessly in every cave of Adullam that renegades from life and adventure and the soul's endless quest have fashioned wherein to hide themselves and sleep and rot. Hence it will on occasion be reckless, ribald, hilarious; now a naughty mocker and iconoclast—but again, and more nobly, a sword of God against all stodge and sloth and death and bondage of the soul. It will break all chains, even of religion. It will anon question all institutions, however sanctioned,—not in gipsy malice, but in liberal experiment in order to conceive a remodelling of things to be adopted transiently if found fairer; and if not, to be discarded and abandoned. It is a torch thrown into the city to burn its dross and stubble. It is a bow of burning gold and arrows of desire.

In all these things — that is, in all things — Art must be free as the wind, can brook no authority, and will own no subject too sacred or too delicate for its treatment. For in this is enwrapped its Vision of God. The old myth of Apollo and Marsyas is profoundly true—Marsyas divided his worship between the God of Song and another, and Apollo flayed him for it,—and the Artist knows that this Beauty commands all that is in him to the very uttermost. He may not call his deity Apollo, may indeed be long in the process of discovering Him in Jesus Christ; but the Altogether Lovely is always growing greater and greater for him, and the Artist (and the art lover, perhaps) cannot think how He is to be conceived or adored with even remotest adequacy without the Arts that the wild Imagination gathers in its flights

and scrupulously (according to its skill) assorts. The only homage for Creation will be creation.

If this is a just statement of the æsthetic basis of life as the poet or artist finds it, it is obviously absurd to speak of either Calvinism or Romanism as dominating or discountenancing the Arts. The question is rather whether either or both of them are, or can be, of any service to Art and the Quest of God in (or as) Beauty.

Nothing is easier than to kick or jeer at the inhibitions of pseudo-Calvinism, but no artist with any sense of his vocation will have much time or strength to spare for a task so puny and irrelevant as that. It may be suggested in passing how very little Calvin and true Calvinism are known, understood, or studied by most people who use these terms as counters. No doubt, a country and a Church discipline that for ages practically held that only one sin — and that, one sternly to be pitied—existed worthy of rigorous punishment, might well (in view of its lack of social compassions and discernments) be a fit object for the derision and the scourge of Art—but to call it either Calvinism or Presbyterianism is to be false both to History and to Language.

The fine, sturdy, freely chosen restraints are a part of all gallant Art as of all worthy, not to say chivalrous, life and character; without them, all is mushy and soft and languishing; and there is much of the very stuff of poetry and music in the traditional austerities of the Scottish soul and faith. Without the element of austerity, however veiled or dissembled, there can be little Art or life worth the name. But it must be recognised, not imposed; it must be chosen (by inward

compulsion, not outward authority, if the choice be not spontaneous). Nor have I found anything in the Scottish Calvinism or Presbyterianism which inherently forbids this freedom or condemns this vision and point of view, but rather much that endorses and approves it. I share devoutly in the homage that artists belonging to, or influenced by, the Church of Rome have expressed by their marvellous works of art, and refuse to recognise credal distinctions at all in this realm; but am sure true Art was never the outcome of repressive doctrines anywhere, nor of self-indulgence, but the overflow of devotion and rapture and love of loveliness exceeding all the sects and formularies; a Spirit that had burned all wrong sensuality out of the being.

. . . . .

The title of my book has been harder to come by than its contents. Mr. John Buchan had made *The Northern Muse* his own. *Harp of the North*, though redolent of Scott, had associations also with certain tartan-covered horrors devoted to sundry shires and dear to foreign tourists. The half-comic streak in a notion of the Scot conveyed by the admirable enough, but minor, art of which Sir Harry Lauder is first exponent had to be firmly abjured as parody—all the more when even a noble English poet suggested that *Hoots!* might fitly be the name of a Scots collection of lyrics. *Holyrood* was selected at last with a hope that it may not be too *good* for a symbol of our present-day Scotland, and in the belief that the contents of the volume are neither tame nor sentimental, but various and wild, and withal dignified, as the Scotland whose

heart and delight was in that "strictly royal" building long ago, and whose dread glory abides in the contrasts of idolatry and iconoclasm that possessed her soul then and, it may be, still claim place within it. I would not have the book my poets have honoured with their works of beauty become a political pamphlet even in the dear cause and hope of a revived Scots nationality, but I should grieve much if it were to convey no hint that, as one of its most distinguished contributors has said, "the spirit of the great period still lingers in the land where the Latin Chair of a University is the Chair of Humanity, and where proud poverty is yet in love with antique learning."

W. H. HAMILTON.

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W. H. H.

THE WAYS OF YOUTH

I

THE WAYS OF YOUTH

Here we have songs of Infancy and Childhood, of Schooldays and College years that could have been passed nowhere but in Scotland, lays of young manhood and the dawn of love—reverential and passionate—and something of the despairs that fall on Youth in Scotland as elsewhere, but with a difference.

Highland Fairies

Being some experiences of a child sent for the body's sake to a shooting-lodge in the hills to the care of a stalker and his wife.

I showed Donald the pictures in my picture-book
Of fairies in the moonlight dancing round about a tree.
I told Donald that I was fond of fairies,
And Donald smiled so far-away and took me on his knee.
One morning very early while still the sun was yawning,
Mairi came and dressed me, and gave me milk and bread;
And I set out with Donald and the little baby morning.
"We'll go and see the fairies now," was all that Donald said.
So up the hill and up the hill I went on Donald's garron
(That's what he calls his pony. I call it Dapple-grey).

Then Donald whispered: "Quiet, now! We're very near the fairies."
And creepy-creep we clambered up, and peeped above the brae.
There were all the fairies in funny coats of brown and white,
Dancing, dancing, dancing on the grass where dew-drops shone.
Flash, flash went their feet. Their mothers all stood watching.
And Donald clapped his hands, and wheef! the fairies all were gone.
These fairies' names are Laoigh. They come into the world in June,
And dance and dance upon the hills among the heather wild.
I used to want to be a fairy like they are in picture-books,
But now I'm all for Laoigh—the red deer child.

I told Donald a story about fairies
That flew on wings across the world, and Donald smiled and said:
"I would be a'takin' you to see the flying fairies,
If Mairi mightn't be too sure that it was time for bed!"
So I kissed Mairi, and went away with Donald then
In the winter evening dark among the frost and snow,
I on Donald's shoulder wrapped up in a tartan plaid
That grew on Donald's father's sheep a hundred years ago.
And when we came at last away up on the mountain
Where the stars were sharp as knives, Donald whispered: "There!"

And I saw the fairies with white wings of gossamer
Flying in the starlight through the shadows of the air.
All white and silent went the flying hill-top fairies.
From the snow into the mist their flitting dance began.
I asked Donald, were they sprites or gnomes or elfin-folk?
And Donald told me that the fairies' name was Ptarmigan.

The brown burn's a gnome that was born in a cavern,
The brown thrush a kindly elf that loves to sing to me,
And the wind among the grasses is a little goblin fellow
That plays the strangest sort of games around the rowan tree.
So I forgot my picture-book with all its kind of fairies—
The Fairy Queens in party frocks with starch in every frill.
And I find all my fairies now in my dear Donald's picture-book—
That very splendid picture-book that Donald calls a hill.

J. B. Salmond.

Sleep Weel

Sleep weel, my bairnie, sleep.
The lang, lang shadows creep,
The fairies play on the munelicht brae
An' the stars are on the deep.

The auld wife sits her lane
Ayont the cauld hearth-stane,
An' the win' comes doon wi' an eerie croon
To hush my bonny wean.

The bogie man's awa',
The *dancers* rise an' fa',
An' the howlet's cry frae the bour-tree high
Comes through the mossy shaw.

Sleep weel, my bairnie, sleep.
The lang, lang shadows creep,
The fairies play on the munelicht brae
An' the stars are on the deep.

Murdoch Maclean.

The Northern Lichts

"Ma daddy turns him tae the sky
And cries on me tae see
They shiftin' beams that dance oot-by
And fleg the he'rt o' me."
"*Laddie, the North is a' a-lowe*
Wi' fires o' siller green,
The stars are dairk owre Windyknowe
That were sae bricht the streen,

"*The lift is fu' o' wings o' licht*
Risin' an' deein' doon——"
"Rax ye yer airm and haud it ticht
Aboot yer little loon,
For oh! the North's an eerie land
And eerie voices blaw
Frae whaur the ghaists o' deid men stand
Wi' their feet amangst the snaw;

"And owre their heids the midnicht sun
Hangs like a croon o' flame,
It's i' the North yon licht's begun
An' I'm fear'd that it's the same!
Haud ye me ticht! Oh, div ye ken
Gin sic-like things can be
That's past the sicht o' muckle men
And nane but bairns can see?"

Violet Jacob.

To a New Baby

Soft, soft shall be the pillow for your head,
Of linen fine and white,
For you so lately had a little bed
With pillows which the angels smoothed and spread
When you lay down at night.

The coverlet shall be of satin rare,
Smooth as a dove's pearl breast,
Lest you should miss that Angel's heavenly care
Who tucked you in, among the stars up there,
And rocked you to safe rest.

And I shall make a little robe, all new,
Of fragile loveliness,
With tiny tucks and lace—it may be true,
I sometimes think, that Mary lent to you
The little Jesus' dress.

She may have dressed you, and may have been glad
To hold you on her knee,
Tales may have told you of her little lad
When He was small—and then perhaps felt sad
To let you come to me.

But I shall sing you songs of love and peace,
When sleep has kissed your eyes,
And pray my lullabies your ears will please,
And that you be not sad when echoes cease
You heard in Paradise.

Mabel V. Irvine.

The Birth-Bed Prayer

(Old Aberdeenshire Customs)

I

It's three times roun', an' three times roun';
Till three times three be nine:—
Gode sain this umman and hir bairn
Wi' thy great poo'r divine:

By mornin' licht an' can'le licht—
Fae dreids o' day an' dark—
Fae fairy wiles an' slicht o' witch,
An' ilka care an' cark.

II

It's three times roun', an' three times roun'
By holy can'le licht—
We pray the poo'r that sits abeen,
To hald them in His sicht:

To keep their heids an' eke their feet
Fae all accurs't that is
An' airt them aye the lawfu' ways
An' grant o' grace to hiz.

III

It's three times roun', an' three times roun';
Till three times three be nine,
Wi' book, an' breid, an' can'le licht;
This bairn fae ill to twine:—

The bairn fae ill; the wife fae ill;
An' hir good husband dear:
And may the poo'r that rules abeen,
In holy love be here.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

Observances

A boy row in a umman's coatie—
In a man's sark row a lassie:
Nor wash their palms, nor cut their nails,
For fear ye teem luck's tassie.

Pit breid an' cheese aneth their heids,
An' wus them hale an' happie:
Pit butter till the bairnie's feet,
An' syne tak' oot yer drappie.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

Childhood

Long time he lay upon the sunny hill,
To his father's house below securely bound.
Far off the silent, changing sound was still,
With the black islands lying thick around.

He knew each separate height, each vaguer hue,
  Where the massed isles more distant rolled away;
But though all ran together in his view,
  He knew that unseen straits between them lay.

Sometimes he wondered what new shores were there:
  In thought he saw the still light on the sand,
The shallow water clear in tranquil air,
  And walked through it in joy from strand to strand.

Oft o'er the sound a ship so slow would pass
  That in the black hills' gloom it seemed to lie;
The evening sound was smooth like sunken glass,
  And time seemed finished ere the ship passed by.

Grey tiny rocks slept round him where he lay,
  Moveless as they; more still when evening came.
The grasses threw straight shadows far away,
  And from the house his mother called his name.

Edwin Muir.

Last Song

To the Sun
Who has shone
  All day,
To the Moon
Who has gone
  Away,
To the milk-white,
Silk-white,
Lily-white Star,
A fond goodnight
Wherever you are.

James Guthrie.

The Stolen Princess

O, scented ropes in the forest catch at her little feet,
Honeysuckle and woodbine, binding her down and down,
While over her head the oak-tree's star-shotten branches meet
And foxgloves nod in the bracken, pink as her own pink gown.
There in the leafy silence, there in the heart o' the dell
The Wee Folk and Good Folk hold her for ever and a day,
And down in the oak-tree forest only the lark can tell
How she was stol'n by the fairies in the pride o' the May.

O ankle deep in the daisies she stands from dawn till dawn;
The half-blown roses open and the full-blown roses fall,
While summer and winter tiptoe over the forest lawn
And saplings rise from the acorns, mistily green and tall.
Soon she will be but a foxglove where other foxgloves grow,
Down in the oak-tree hollow with woodbine barring the way,
Pink-gowned there in the dimness with only the lark to know
How she was stol'n by the fairies in the pride o' the May.

Joan Noble MacKenzie.

From "A Lan'wart Loon"

Noo, frae the scrogs up near a linn
That spreed its gray-tail to the sin,
A fallow deer cam' oot to drink,
An' hovert denty on the brink.
To sclim up there Tam fain wad ettle,
For noo he was in unco fettle,
Sae, up the joukin' watter-side
He'd warsle on, whate'er betide;
The day was mair nor hafflins thro',
But Tammy thocht he'd time enoo.
The scarrow o' the mune, tho' puir,
Wad licht 'im hame across the muir;
He'd ha'e ae blink oot ower the cairn,
An' syne for hame to tak' his fairin'.
('Twas aye Tam's wey, be't guid or ill,
To seek for ferlies 'yont the hill.)
Sae up he hirplt past the linn,
Wi' noo an' than a gliff ahin',
Whiles haudin' by a wurly scrabble
That yerkt him upwart in his habble,
Whiles skrauchlin' on his haun's an' knees
Wi' nae tuft near 'im for a heeze;
An', antrin times, he'd traik awa'
To wyde knee-deep in wreaths o' snaw,
Or scoor thro' gullies o' a glen
To fin', maybe, a smuggler's den,
An' sprauchle ben an' farrer ben;
Or ower the braes a stane he'd coup,
An' lauch to see it stot an' loup
Doon 'mang the whins an' scutt'rin' yowes
An' rabbits beekin' on the knowes,

Till, rummlin' to a fail-dyke fauld,
The kecklin' an' the steer devald;
Or noo he'd lint his houchs an' banes
Wanchancy-like on shiftin' stanes
An' slither doon wi' reeshlin' din,
Athin an ell-wand o' the linn;
But sune's he'd fair got ower his fley,
Whistlin' a stave, he'd rax his wey,
Whaur birny runts wad gi'e a grup
To help 'im aye the farrer up.
For Tammy bood to ha'e ae gliff
Ayont that stark an' beetlin' cliff;
Sae, on he stoitert to the broo
Wi' nae breath left to keckle noo,
But ilka scree he sclam upon
He saw anither farrer on;
Syne, when he hainglt, like to drap,
An' stachert dweebly ower the tap,
A heav'nly cantrip Tammy saw
That tuik his scanty breath awa',
As far ablow him burst the sea
In a' its witchin' glamerie.

There, i' the lown o' muckle hills,
It nestled bonnily, an' still's
A deuk pond or the curlers' dam,
The only lochans kent to Tam,
An' ben the hills the sin was sklentin',
An' ower the sea a reid path glentin',
An' lilly boats gaed snoovin' by,
Like cluds athort the simmer sky.
Tam's e'en were stell'd intill his heid
Wi' fainness an' a kin' o' dreid;
He glow'rt as gif he'd tint his wits,

An' clean forgot his hoven cuits,
His stechy stumps an' mendit claes
In ae graun' dinnle o' amaze;
His sairs an' tairs an' hungry wame
An' fear o' flytin' tongues at hame,
An' a' the efterins o' his ploy
Had santit in a gale o' joy.

Syne to his min' there cam' anon,
The "maister's" screed frae Xenophon,
'Boot hoo an airmy o' the Greeks,
Forfouchen i' the hills for weeks,
Had, ane an' a', gane gyte wi' glee,
Whan suddently they glifft the sea.
He hadna, than, thocht muckle o't,
But noo it grupt him by the throat;
His hert was gowpin' in his moo
For a' the joy that dirl'd him thro',
Nor kent he hoo it hurtit sae
His first ae glisk o' Corrie Bay.

J. G. Horne.

Salute to the Mantuan

O gouden was the Whinnie Brae
I wandered as a bairn,
But I sawna the gowan there,
I sawna the fern.
The ae leaf I gliskit
In the mornins dule
Was in the wee Latin buik
The hale mile tae schule.

And daunderin' doon the brae hame
Wi' Vergil in my loof
Troy warked sae greatly in my wame,
Tae pit it tae the proof
I wad hae made a wudden horse
Oot o' ilk aiken tree,
And cut the rowans intae spears
For sake o' chivalrie.

Lewis Spence.

Usipetes and Tencteri

You must have lived: I only know
You died two thousand years ago:
Only the names that you went by
Sing on, ring down most deathlessly.
Two thousand years ago you died
In battle by a river's side;
Lush in the meadow you were grass
For Cæsar's sickle—so it was
You filled his famine, being dead;
"Men, women, children," Cæsar said.
Oh, hard bright Roman swords that slew
You at his bidding, without rue!
Oh, hard bright brain that bade you die,
And kept your names to haunt me by—
Usipetes and Tencteri!

Alister Mackenzie.

Shon Campbell

Shon Campbell went to College
  Because he wanted to,
He left the croft in Gairloch
  To dive in Bain and Drew;
Shon Campbell died at College
  When the sky of spring was blue.

Shon Campbell went to College—
  The pulpit was his aim.
By day and night he ground; for
  He was Highland, dour and game.
The session was a hard one;
  Shon flickered like a flame.

Shon Campbell went to College
  And gave the ghost up there,
Attempting six men's cramming
  On a mean and scanty fare.
Three days the tertians mourned for him—
  'Twas all that they could spare.

Shon Campbell lies in Gairloch
  Unhooded and ungowned,
The green quadrangle of the hills
  To watch his sleep profound,
And the Gaudeamus of the burns
  Making a homely sound.

But when the last great Roll is called
  And adsums thunder loud,
And when the Quad is cumbered
  With an eager jostling crowd,
The Principal who rules us all
  Will say, "Shon Campbell, come;
Your Alma Mater hails you
  Magister Artium."

W. A. Mackenzie.

Almæ Matres

(*St. Andrews*, 1862. *Oxford*, 1865)

St. Andrews by the northern sea,
  A haunted town it is to me!
A little city, worn and gray,
  The gray North Ocean girds it round;
And o'er the rocks, and up the bay,
  The long sea-rollers surge and sound;
And still the thin and biting spray
  Drives down the melancholy street,
And still endure, and still decay,
  Towers that the salt winds vainly beat.
Ghost-like and shadowy they stand
Dim-mirrored in the wet sea-sand.

O ruined chapel! long ago
  We loitered idly where the tall
Fresh-budded mountain-ashes blow
  Within thy desecrated wall:

The tough roots rent the tomb below,
The April birds sang clamorous,
We did not dream, we could not know,
How hardly fate would deal with us!

O broken minster, looking forth
Beyond the bay, above the town!
O winter of the kindly North,
O college of the scarlet gown,
And shining sands beside the sea,
And stretch of links beyond the sand,
Once more I watch you, and to me
It is as if I touched his hand!

And therefore art thou yet more dear,
O little city, gray and sere,
Though shrunken from thine ancient pride
And lonely by thy lonely sea,
Than these fair halls on Isis' side,
Where Youth an hour came back to me!

A land of waters green and clear,
Of willows and of poplars tall,
And, in the spring-time of the year,
The white may breaking over all,
And Pleasure quick to come at call,
And summer rides by marsh and wold,
And autumn with her crimson pall
About the towers of Magdalen rolled;
And strange enchantments from the past,
And memories of the friends of old,
And strong Tradition, binding fast
The "flying terms" with bands of gold,—

All these hath Oxford: all are dear,
But dearer far the little town,
The drifting surf, the wintry year,
The college of the scarlet gown,
St. Andrews by the northern sea,
That is a haunted town to me!

Andrew Lang.

After Many Days

The mist hangs round the College tower,
The ghostly street
Is silent at this midnight hour
Save for my feet.

With none to see, with none to hear,
Downward I go
To where beside the rugged pier
The sea sings low.

It sings a tune well loved and known
In days gone by
When often here, and not alone,
I watched the sky.

That was a barren time at best,
Its fruits were few;
But fruits and flowers had keener zest
And fresher hue.

Life has not since been wholly vain,
And now I bear
Of wisdom, plucked from joy and pain,
Some slender share.

But, howsoever rich the store,
I'd lay it down
To feel upon my back once more
The old red gown.

Robert F. Murray.

An Eightsome Reel

(Tune: *The De'il Amang the Tailors*)

O it's blithe up at Blair in the season of the berry-picker,
Merry goes the motion of the reel and lusty lasses flicker
In and out the mirthful rout and roundabout and ever quicker
Trip it in the twilight to the wild old tune.

And ever as the piper plays beneath the fainting opal rays
Bewildered is the gaze to spell how well they thread the careless maze
As in and out with joyful shout the youthful rout keep holidays
A-dancing till the nightfall to the wild old tune.

And it's happy on the hairst when at set of sun the merry reaper
Keeps the reel a-lilting gaily round in darkness ever deeper
Till in dreams the music streams and still it seems to every sleeper
Still the nimble feet obey the wild old tune.

W. H. Hamilton.

Mairi Dancing

Oh! had you seen our Mairi dance
With rosy tartan plaid a-trail
Across the reaped field's shorn gold
To worship her you could not fail,
So light her movements, and so gay
Her dancing, and her youthful grace,
You had been lost in reverie
Longing to see her hidden face.
And when she turned and the red shawl
Floated behind her like a cloud,
The very fact that she had turned
Towards you, made you proud.
And after she had passed from sight
The story to yourself you told,
How Mairi danced with tartan plaid
Across the reaped field's shorn gold.

Mary E. Boyle.

Abasshyd

(XVth Century English)

I

I toke hyr heid atween my hondes
And kyste hyr dusky hair;
I lyghtly touchte hyr luvely cheek,
Syne kyste hyr mouth so rare.

II

A lityll flame cam up hyr neck
To tell hyr herte had fyre;
But, sum aschamte, wyth eyen cast down,
Hyr mynde restrainte desyre.

III

A swete, pure mayde of gentyl kynd—
A flowr ryght fayre to see;
Yet wyth ane potent gyfte of sowle
Fro yll to keep hyr free.

IV

Abasshte before hyr luvelyness
I knelt and kyste hyr honde;
In token that I humbled me,
And stayed at hyr commaunde.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

TAM I' THE KIRK

O JEAN, my Jean, when the bell ca's the congregation
Owre valley an' hill wi' the ding frae its iron mou',
When a' body's thochts is set on his ain salvation,
Mine's set on you.

There's a reid rose lies on the Buik o' the Word afore ye
That was growin' braw on its bush at the keek o' day,
But the lad that pu'd yon flower i' the mornin's glory—
He canna pray.

He canna pray; but there's nane i' the kirk will heed him
Whaur he sits sae still his lane by the side o' the wa',
For nane but the reid rose kens what my lassie gie'd him—
It an' us twa!

He canna sing for the sang that his ain he'rt raises,
He canna see for the mist that's 'afore his e'en,
And a voice drouns the hale o' the psalms an' the paraphrases,
Cryin' "Jean, Jean, Jean!"

Violet Jacob.

Shy Geordie

Up the Noran Water,
In by Inglismaddy,
Annie's got a bairnie
That hasna got a daddy.
Some say it's Tammas's
An' some say it's Chay's;
An' naebody expec'it it,
Wi' Annie's quiet ways.

Up the Noran Water,
The bonnie little mannie
Is dandlit an' cuddlit close
By Inglismaddy's Annie.
Wha the bairnie's faither is
The lassie never says;
But some think it's Tammas's,
An' some think it's Chay's.

Up the Noran Water
The country folk are kind;
An' wha the bairnie's daddy is
They dinna muckle mind.
But oh! the bairn at Annie's breist,
The love in Annie's e'e!
They mak' me wish wi' a' my micht
The lucky lad was me!

Helen B. Cruickshank.

John

I LO'E tae stan' ahint the door
An' watch ma John come ben;
He's no' the prince o' lovers
Nor the comeliest o' men;
But somewey, whin I see him
I dinna fear life's ills,
For he seems tae cairry wi' him
The bigness o' the hills.

He gies a wee chap at the door,
An' then he whustles low,
An' dichts his feet upon the sack;
His weys are quiet and slow.
Whin I slip oot an' kiss him
He stammers "Eh! It's Jean!"
But if his lips are lan'ersome
He's quicker wi' his een.

Ma mither ca's him "Gowky";
She doesna like ma John;

But she wad, if she had seen him
  Wi' a cheepy in his haun'.
Haun's sae big, sae tender,
  The lintie wis sae wee;
If God's ain haun's
Are like ma John's
  I'm no' afeared tae dee.

Wendy Wood.

Lizzie

Bessie walked oot wi' Tam yestreen,
  Robin is coortin' Mary,
The halflin-laddie is unco keen
  On Kate doonbye at the dairy;
But naebody comes a-coortin' me—
Me, that's bonnier nor the three!

Bess is a thowless shilpit quean,
  Mary is mim an' primsy,
Kate has a tongue as sharp's a preen,
  Forbye, she's muckle an' clumsy.
It's queer they ha'e a' got lads but me—
Me, that's cleverer nor the three!

Tam, he's lanky an' pirny-taed,
  Robin's owre fond o' siller;
As for Kate an' the halflin-lad,
  What can he see intil her?
In fac', it's clear—as clear's can be—
There's nane o' them guid eneuch for me!

Kate, she leuch i' my face the day
An' sneered, the impident hizzie!
"Ye've muckle conceit o' yersel', ye ha'e,
But ye're green wi' envy, Lizzie!"
Envy? My wumman, juist bide a wee,
I'se warrant I wed the best o' the three!

I'm wastin' mysel' on this weary ferm,
My thochts to the toon are turnin'.
I'll tak' a place at the Marti'mas term
An' be dune wi' milkin' an' kirnin'.
An' Kate will see what she will see,
For mebbe a P'liceman will mairry me!

Helen B. Cruickshank.

A Herd of Does

There is no doe in all the herd
Whose heart is not her heart,
O Earth, with all their glimmering eyes
She sees thee as thou art.

Like them in shapes of fleeting fire
She mingles with the light
Till whoso saw her sees her not
And doubts his former sight.

They come and go and none can say
Who sees them subtly run
If they indeed are forms of life
Or figments of the sun.

So is she one with Heaven here,
Confounding mortal eyes,
As do the holy dead who move
Innumerous in the skies.

But now and then a wandering man
May glimpse as on he goes
A golden movement of her dreams
As 'twere a herd of does.

Hugh M'Diarmid.

May-Music

Oh! lose the winter from thine heart, the darkness from thine eyes,
And from the low hearth-chair of dreams, my Love-o'-May, arise;
And let the maidens robe thee like a white white-lilac tree,
Oh! hear the call of Spring, fair Soul—and wilt thou come with me?

Even so, and even so!
Whither thou goest, I will go.
I would follow thee.

Then wilt thou see the orange-trees star-flowering over Spain,
Or arched and mounded Kaiser-towns that moulder mid Almain,
Or through the cypress-gardens go of magic Italy?
Oh! East or West or South or North, say, wilt thou come with me?

Even so, and even so!
Whither thou goest, I will go.
I will follow thee.

But wilt thou farther come with me through hawthorn
red and white
Until we find the wall that hides the Land of Heart's
delight?
The gates all carved with olden things are strange and
dread to see;
But I will lift thee through, fair Soul. Arise and come
with me!

Even so, Love, even so!
Whither thou goest, I will go!
Lo, I follow thee.

Rachel Annand Taylor.

I Took My Love

I took my love by a woodside
Which soft grass washes like a tide,
Where drunk bees stagger past the ear,
From Inn to Inn with sudden cheer.

To warm her love I wished her brought
Where the bee sings and Time is nought,
And over Clyde's impassioned skies
The air breaks into butterflies.

I took her where the wanton flowers
Can keep the sunshine after hours,
And daisies' puritan-caress
Might teach the kiss of holiness;

And stayed while beams drew slant, too soon,
That soft glow makes an afternoon;
Then like a wild bird in her side,
Her heart sprang up at eventide.

Robert Crawford.

The Coming of Rebekah

After the burden and the heat of day,
When from the sky the last bright tint had died,
Across the dusky fields where shadows lay,
The gentle Isaac walked at eventide,
And, through the misty twilight as he dreamed,
One came with train of camels from afar,
On whose fair brow and throat his jewels gleamed,
Her veilèd beauty shining like a star.

In the pale evening light he saw her come,
His love, chosen of God, and she was sweet;
And, lo! the crowded way grew dim, the hum
Of voices faint, nor did he hear the bleat
Of tired camels, as her he drew apart—
Only the wild sweet tumult of his heart.

Helen Myers Meldrum.

The Courtship of Eve

I met her in the garden of the Lord;
In those bright purlieus where an angel flies
Above white boughs and where the love-bird cries,
I met her in the garden and adored.

For in her look was all soft promise stored,
As though the liquid colours of her eyes
Were crystallisings of the tenderest sighs,
In whose deep shining gleamed a treasure-hoard.

Her lashes innocently bared to me,
Past their silk curtains, love's hid oasis;
And such her look that—had they eyes—each tree,
Sap-stirred, had surely trembled at man's bliss.
But we were there alone—alone! and she
So beautiful! I know not what she is!

. . . . .

I know not what she is! She is so sweet,
An ardent lily in her God's attire,
Slender and soft as cloud-wreath of white fire
When hill-top seraphs through my dreams repeat
That dawn has chased the night with flying feet.
Snow-bourgeoned Eve! How can I but aspire
After this thing that flies before me, shyer,
As though her primrose pulse feared this strong beat.

If she would but lean o'er some daffodil,
Or bluest bugloss trap her with surprise,
That I might catch and taste the honey-spill
Of her warm crimson lips and merry cries!
I climb on every gesture, thrill on thrill,
Lost on the unscaled heights of sinless eyes.

Robert Crawford.

An Eastern Song

Yes, ivory and gold and musk and myrrh,
  Frankincense, aloes, cassia, heap and bring;
Then, with thine eyes the sole interpreter,
  Present thine offerings—this the thought they sing:
"Queen of the world, in all things all complete,
Behold my heart, a world, beneath thy feet."

Yes, amethyst and emerald and pearl
  And rarest jewels past all reckoning
Gather innumerable—and this one girl
  Cancels the wealth of all thy gathering,
Herself a purer pearl than ever bore
Unfathomed brine or hidden faery shore.

Yes, heaven fulfilled of frank unstainèd stars
  And coloured flowers that clothe the earth like seas,
And songs that bind the soul with golden bars
  And odours of the Orient—even of these
God wove her web of being all divine,
  And yet—I dare to love and call her mine!

Victor F. Murray.

Glances

O weel I mind the bonnie morn,
  Richt early in the day,
When he cam' in by oor toun end
  To buy a sou o' hay.

For O he was a handsome lad,
An' weel did cock his beaver!—
He gar't my heart play pit-a-pat:
Yet—speered but for my faether!

I turned aboot and gied a cast
That plainly said—"Ye deevil!—
Altho' ye be a braw young lad
Ye needna be uncevil!"

He glower't at me like ane gaen wud—
Wi' his daurin' rovin' e'en;
At that I leuch and wi' a fling
Flew roun' the bourtree screen.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

The Gipsy Lass

The road I traivel's no' for ye,
Sandy, Sandy.
The weird that's mine ye maunna dree,
Sandy dear my lad.
Ye maunna link yer life wi' shame
Nor think to tak' into yer hame
A gipsy lass withoot a name,
Sandy dear my lad.

I never kent wha faithered me,
Sandy, Sandy,
For mither's gane wi' twa or three,
Sandy dear my lad.

The gipsy-he'rt maun ever range
An' so it's mebbe no' that strange
That I, like her, am fond o' change,
Sandy dear my lad.

I couldna thole a hoose o' stane,
Sandy, Sandy.
For me, the brackens up the lane,
Sandy dear my lad.
Yer e'en sae bonny blue an' clear
Wad tine their cheery look, I fear,
Afore we had been wed a year,
Sandy dear my lad.

An' tho' I lo'e ye weel the noo,
Sandy, Sandy,
I doot I'd gi'e ye cause tae rue,
Sandy dear my lad.
Sae gang yer ways—they'll ne'er be mine,
For you an' me that kissed maun twine.
(*But oh! I'm wae my lad tae tine,*
Sandy dear my lad!)

Helen B. Cruickshank.

A Farewell

O Marjorie and little Jane
When I kissed you good-bye
There was no murmur from the gods,
No portent in the sky.

Our kisses shattered no deep peace
Nor crowned long agony,
Our lips were laughing when they met
And parted laughingly.

You will have no flushed memories
Suppose we meet again,
And I, God help me, may not know
Dark Marjorie from Jane.

E. R. R. Linklater.

The Sang

The auld fouks praised his glancin' e'en,
Tae ilka bairn he was a frien',
A likelier lad ye wadna see
Bit—he was nae the lad fur me.

He brocht me troots frae lochans clear,
A skep o' bees, a skin o' deer;
There's nane s'uld tak' wha canna gie,
An' he was nae the lad fur me.

He luiket aince, he luiket lang,
He pit his hert-brak in a sang;
He heard the soondin' o' the sea,
An' a' wis bye wi' him an' me.

The tune gaed soughin' thro' the air,
The shepherds sang't at Lammas fair,
It ran ower a' the braes o' Dee,
The bonnie sang he made fur me.

Sae lang 'twill last as mithers croon
And sweethearts seek the simmer's moon;
Oh, I hae gi'en wha wadna gie,
For it s'all live when I maun dee.

Marion Angus.

Past and Future

It was a cradle song you sang,
The listeners, for a little space,
When it was over could not speak,
Such tenderness was in your face.

"It is dead Margaret's voice," they said.
It was the lilt she loved the best;
Dim through my rising tears I saw
My little child upon your breast.

David Cleghorn Thomson.

Mary's Song

I wad ha'e gi'en him my lips tae kiss,
Had I been his, had I been his;
Barley breid and elder wine,
Had I been his as he is mine.

The wanderin' bee it seeks the rose;
Tae the lochan's bosom the burnie goes;
The grey bird cries at evenin's fa',
"My luve, my fair one, come awa'."

My beloved sall ha'e this he'rt tae break,
Reid, reid wine and the barley cake,
A he'rt tae break, and a mou' tae kiss,
Tho' he be nae mine, as I am his.

Marion Angus.

In the Orchard

"I thought you loved me."
"No, it was only fun."
"When we stood there, closer than all?"
"Well, the harvest moon
Was shining and queer in your hair, and it turned my head."
"That made you?"
"Yes."
"Just the moon and the light it made
Under the tree?"
"Well, your mouth too."
"Yes, my mouth?"
"And the quiet there that sang like the drum in the booth.
You shouldn't have danced like that."
"Like what?"
"So close,
With your head turned up, and the flower in your hair, a rose
That smelt all warm."
"I loved you. I thought you knew
I wouldn't have danced like that with any but you."
"I didn't know. I thought you knew it was fun."

"I thought it was love you meant."
"Well, it's done."
"Yes, it's done.
I've seen boys stone a blackbird, and watched them drown
A kitten . . . it clawed at the reeds, and they pushed it down
Into the pool while it screamed. Is that fun, too?"
"Well, boys are like that . . . your brothers. . . ."
"Yes, I know.
But you, so lovely and strong! Not you! Not you!"
"They don't understand it's cruel. It's only a game."
"And are girls fun, too?"
"No, still in a way it's the same.
It's queer and lovely to have a girl. . . ."
"Go on."
"It makes you mad for a bit to feel she's your own,
And you laugh and kiss her, and maybe you give her a ring,
But it's only in fun."
"But I gave you everything."
"Well, you shouldn't have done it. You know what a fellow thinks
When a girl does that."
"Yes, he talks of her over his drinks
And calls her a——"
"Stop that now. I thought you knew."
"But it wasn't with anyone else. It was only you."
"How did I know? I thought you wanted it too.
I thought you were like the rest—Well, what's to be done?"
"To be done?"
"Is it all right?"

"Yes."
"Sure?"
"Yes, but why?"
"I don't know. I thought you were going to cry.
You said you had something to tell me."
"Yes, I know.
It wasn't anything really. . . . I think I'll go."
"Yes, it's late. There's thunder about, a drop of rain
Fell on my hand in the dark. I'll see you again
At the dance next week. You're sure that every-
thing's right?"
"Yes."
"Well, I'll be going."
"Kiss me. . . ."
"Good night. . . ."
"Good night."

Muriel Stuart.

The Preference

"I WILL give you a gay blue cloak
Soft with queen's miniver."
"He will give me a shroud of flame
And I find it lovelier."

"I will lap you in smooth white silk
In a carved-angel bed."
"But he has doomed me to the stake,
And I have bowed my head."

Rachel Annand Taylor.

At Sweet Mary's Shrine

I'll sleep me soun' the nicht while sigh
The sauchs an' tender Ythan:
They're singin' to the sairest hairt
That e'er Love aince was blythe in.

Love broke my hairt, an' got within—
He only tried to pain it:—
How could Love bra'k sae soft a hairt?—
I never socht to hain it.

I tak' the simple, ae-fauld thing
That's been sae sairly siftit,
An' lay it on sweet Mary's Shrine,
An' leave her grace to lift it.

Jessie Annie Anderson.

Gay Girl to Good Girl

What is virtue, when all's done,
Withered breast, shaking knees?
Cold thoughts sitting in the sun,
If it only bring you these?

Men love virtue—so they say,
So they say, but what they do
Kisses half your soul away,
And takes virtue out of you!

When you die, they'll say, "Poor thing!"
When I'm dead, they'll lean above;
One will kiss me, one will bring
A posy for the sake of love.

When we're both dead, gone far hence,
Will it matter what we've been?
On your virtues and my sins
Grass will grow as quick and green.

Muriel Stuart.

I WILL NOT HEAR THE SEA

I WILL not hear the sea nor hearken to its crying,
Lest it should steal my woe from me and lull it on its breast,
Gather my sorrow close—away from my heart sighing—
Out where the waves are green and deep, and there hush it to rest.

I must not look upon the sea with the grey mist for cover
Lest I, who have lost all, should lose my pain
That lies close on my heart—ah, closer than a lover—
Telling of dreams that are lost, that come no more again.

Maimie A. Richardson.

THE HEROIC

II

THE HEROIC

Love of the land—of its proud capital city ("a mad God's dream"), of its country places, and islands remote and mysterious—is a strong vein in the Scot. He is the son of a hundred generations of warriors, and worships the chivalrous kings and fair queens and witty bards of bygone years and the lost causes and forlorn hopes and red defeats and hardships that fill the most precious pages of their story—nor is the ancient spirit of their fortitude and chivalry fled. Empire and the Great War are witnesses to that, and the Scottish soul dares yet wilder dreams of chivalry beyond all that ever was or can be, and stands fast for Freedom still, "though e'er sae puir," ready to welcome Pain and many a stark renunciation.

The Enchanted Princess

Sunk, sunk in life more dead than sleep,
And silent when thou shouldst be loud,
Still do thy faithful sentinels keep
Their patient watch and service proud.
Awake! for all thy hills rejoice
To hear again the Muses' voice.

Thy lover comes—oh, sleeping face
So fair that none so fair as this,
Asleep in any storied place,
Was ever wakened by a kiss!
His lips are near thee: now they close
Upon the shut enchanted rose.

Awake! the broidered robes of time,
The rich regalia of thy fame,
The throne that heroes made sublime,
The crown of proud and ancient name,
Await thee, Princess! Ercildoune
Shall thrill his fairy harp at Scoune.

And all thy land shall stir and thrill,
The fading legends glow and live,
The Fiery Cross wake strath and hill,
The gallant Lion banner give
Its splendour to the winds of home,
And ancient mastery of the foam.

Awake, thou! Bless the eager faces,
The hearts that hunger for thy sake,
Come from thy dream in sleep's far places,
Before the eager hearts shall break;
And on the hill and down the glen,
Indifferent night fall dark again.

George Reston Malloch.

The Prows o' Reekie

O wad this braw hie-heapit toun
Sail aff like an enchanted ship,
Drift ower the warld's seas up and doun
And kiss wi' Venice lip tae lip,
Or anchor intae Naples Bay
A misty island far astray,
Or set her rock tae Athens' wa'
Pillar tae pillar, stane tae stane,
The cruiket spell o' her backbane,
Yon shadow-mile o' spire and vane,
Wad ding them a', wad ding them a'!
Cadiz wad tine the admiralty
O' yonder emerod fair sea,
Gibraltar frown for frown exchange
Wi' Nigel's Crags at elbuck-range,
The rose-red banks o' Lisbon make
Mair room in Tagus for her sake.

A hoose is but a puppet-box
Tae keep life's images frae knocks,
But mannikins scrieve oot their sauls
Upon its craw-steps and its walls;
Where hae they writ them mair sublime
Than on yon gable-ends o' time?

Lewis Spence.

Edinburgh in Autumn

The leaves are down in Dreghorn woods,
The leaves upon the road are spread,
And there's a wind from sea that shrills,
And there's a wind from lowland hills
Tossing the withered and the red;
While in its smoke-mist shot with thread
Of autumn gold, the city broods.

On the dark, whistling wind of Time
The blazoned years go brightly down,
Tarnished with ancient sorrow's stain,
Gay in the rags of glory's gown,
Dead as dry leaves: yet here remain
Beauty, and this brave Town
Dim through the grey October rime.

Christine Orr.

The Lost Lyon

King Elshinner a ship he biggit
  Wi' heave-a-lowe, ye ho!
Cut frae the guid pine-wood and riggit
  Wi' hemp frae the Lowlands low,
Whare the lyart lint doth grow,
  Ye ho!
And the lilt o' the loom is slow.

O wae the axe that cut yon wood,
  The loom that spun yon strand,
For King Elshinner's galley guid
  Sall never win to land!

The tempests grey o' Norroway,
Yon etins fell and dour,
Hae blawn her hempen strands to strae,
And dung her decks to stour.

Her seamen's banes are Baltic's stanes,
Their e'en are sirens' play,
But her royal Lyon prow remains—
To hit the mermaids pray.

O see anither ship be biggit,
Wi' a heave-a-lowe, ye ho!
Cut frae the guid pine-wood and riggit
Wi' hemp frae the Lowlands low.

For whatna winds may blow,
Ye ho!
And whatna death ye dee,
The Lyon owre the faem maun go,
And Scotland keep the sea!

Lewis Spence.

From "Death of the Douglas"

To the banners of Scotland there rallied
Twelve knights that came forth of Almayn,
Then to sea from the haven they sallied
And set them for Spain;
Past Cornwall and Brittany sailing,
The pillars of Hercules past,
Till the blue of the sea-mist unveiling,
Shows Seville at last.

Here the King of all Spain sends them greeting
And gifts both of jewels and gold;
But their quest is for something less fleeting
Than aught can be given or sold;
His gifts they restore, but are willing
To combat the Saracen there,
The behest of the monarch fulfilling
Whose heart is their care.

The Saracen rides in his splendour;
Quoth Alfonso to Douglas: "Be thine
To lead forth the vanguard; I render
To Douglas the place that is mine."
He gives him the flower of his horsemen,
And the Scotsmen are all with their chief,
O, the sun shines full bright on their course then,
A shield in relief.

As the clarion soundeth the onslaught,
From its chain doth the Douglas make loose
The casket with lions thereon wrought,
That holdeth the heart of the Bruce;
And "O, heart," quoth the Douglas, "that ever
Was wont with the foremost to fight,
The sword that us twain shall dissever
Shall bring me the night."

Then he casts it and, shouting his war-cry:
"A Douglas! A Douglas!" he dives
To the place where he sees it afar lie,
As he mows down the Saracen lives.

He comes to it; hasten, O Sinclair,
Behold how the Saracens press;
Dig the spurs deep for Douglas and win there
To aid his distress!

. . . . .

Thus they meet with their death, for they ask it—
And the best of all deaths they have died;
And the heart of the Bruce in its casket
Lies pressed to the Douglas's side.
Saint Andrew of Scotland watched o'er it,
O'er the body of Douglas Saint Bride,
Good Sir William of Keith 'twas that bore it
Back home o'er the tide

With the casket and heart, and they laid them,
The casket and heart, at Melrose,
As the good Earl of Moray he bade them;
But the bones of the Douglas repose
In the Church of Saint Bride 'neath the granite,
Where yet ye shall view, an ye please,
Eighth marvel of seven on our planet,
The Douglas at peace.

Douglas Ainslie.

FROM "KING JAMES THE FIRST OF SCOTLAND"

King James. . . . A queer life living here the whole year through—
Nothing but naked hill and moor and sky.
And yet, come here; here is a strange thing, Athole,
Look through that window. Range on range of hills,

Wave beyond wave till all are lost in mist;
And in that mist the children of the mist,
Folk whom we barely know, alien and fierce,
Yet of an unmatched loyalty to their chief.
Why, they will let themselves be carved by inches
To save his little finger, sleep on snow
Provided he have shelter. Now, look South,
Open the door there, Seton—and you'll see,
As I saw when I entered, the young Tay
—There it lies blood-red in the setting sun,—
Enriching all the south-land with its waters.
This is my Scotland, O my most dear land,
The land I dreamed of when in England, now
All shining at my feet fairer than dream.
I know you're laughing at me in your heart;
But I am young yet, and I'd see my land
One from the northern seas to the Border Hills,
One race, one law, and all one wild desire
To make their country great among the nations.
The Tay came from these hills, from out that mist:
Is it a fool's hope that in time to come,
My children of the mist—for they are mine,
Though I have whipped them cruelly—will pour
Their hearts' blood to the making of this land?
It may be,—but the hills, the hills uplift me,
And I grow crazy with the visions they bring
Streaming in rich procession through my brain—
What is that music? . . .
I know, I know, 'tis the cry of a weeping clan,
Never were keenest joy and sharpest sorrow
So exquisitely mingled. Arrow-keen,
Lingering as pain, yet sweet as love's first kiss.
I doubt there's some wild Scots blood in me, Athole.

And that's their music? Wild Scots! 'Tis we
are tame,
Compared with these, my children. By God's help,
I'll bring them home yet, if I die in the doing o't.

Robert Bain.

Alas! Poor Queen

She was skilled in music and the dance
And the old arts of love
At the court of the poisoned rose
And the perfumed glove,
And gave her beautiful hand
To the pale Dauphin
A triple crown to win—
And she loved little dogs
And parrots
And red-legged partridges
And the golden fishes of the Duc de Guise
And a pigeon with a blue ruff
She had from Monsieur d'Elbœuf.

Master John Knox was no friend to her;
She spoke him soft and kind,
Her honeyed words were Satan's lure
The unwary soul to bind.
"Good sir, doth a lissome shape
And a comely face
Offend your God His Grace
Whose Wisdom maketh these
Golden fishes of the Duc de Guise?"

She rode through Liddesdale with a song;
"Ye streams sae wondrous strang,
Oh, mak' me a wrack as I come back
But spare me as I gang."
While a hill-bird cried and cried
Like a spirit lost
By the grey storm-wind tost.

Consider the way she had to go.
Think of the hungry snare,
The net she herself had woven,
Aware or unaware,
Of the dancing feet grown still,
The blinded eyes.—
Queens should be cold and wise,
And she loved little things,
Parrots
And red-legged partridges
And the golden fishes of the Duc de Guise
And the pigeon with the blue ruff
She had from Monsieur d'Elbœuf.

Marion Angus.

Portrait of Mary Stuart, Holyrood

Wauken be nicht, and bydand on some boon,
Glamour of saul, or spirituall grace,
I haf seen sancts and angells in the face,
And like a fere of seraphy the moon;
But in nae mirk nor sun-apparelled noon
Nor pleasance of the planets in their place
Of luve devine haf seen sae pure a trace
As in yon shadow of the Scottis croun.

Die not, O rose, dispitefull of hir mouth,
Nor be ye lillies waeful at hir snaw;
This dim devyce is but hir painted sake,
The mirour of ane star of vivand youth,
That not hir velvets nor hir balas braw
Can oueradorn, or luve mair luvely make.

Lewis Spence.

The Song of the Highland Sword-maker

There is a tradition that in the sixteenth century Andrea Ferrara had his smithy near the Perthshire village of Aberfeldy. There he made his world-famous swords, and engraved on their blades the cross of St. Andrew.

I am Ferrara, maker of swords.
Out of the hill I take them,
With birch-fire whip I break them,
With kiss of torrent wake them,
And in wide night-space shake them,
I, I, Ferrara, maker of swords!

I am Ferrara, 'prentice to God,
Maker of man's mate. To strong hill deep sleeping,
O'er heathered breast where the ice-stream blood's leaping,
Come I to rend from his side in wild laughter
Iron rib fit for man's mating hereafter.
I, I, Ferrara, 'prentice to God!

I am Ferrara, breaker of sword-colts.
My whips are the lash of the green birch-fire flaming.
Under the leaping thongs, stallions I'm taming.

Strong hands of mine are the reins that shall mould them
So they obey when the hero-hands hold them.
I, I, Ferrara, breaker of sword-colts!

I am Ferrara, uniter of lovers.
I bring the boy-sword to cold virgin river.
She kisses his lips, and the wild racking shiver
Fills all his length with desire of great doing.
Man-sword heart opens its beat in the wooing.
I, I, Ferrara, uniter of lovers!

I am Ferrara, singer of songs,
Crooner of red tales to young sword all listening,
Tales of red heather, of red stag-blood glistening
Over the snow, of red flame, and night-burnings,
Of great goings-out and of greater returnings.
I, I, Ferrara, singer of songs!

I am Ferrara, pointer of roads.
I take the young sword all clamour for going
To crest of sire-hill, and in witch-moon's wild glowing
Over the long earth I swing him, strong heaving,
Cry, "There is your road-way, and all for the cleaving!"
I, I, Ferrara, pointer of roads!

I am Ferrara, priest of a temple.
All a long night lies the sword on the altar
Of Andrew lest in battle-ordeal he falter.
So in the morning I brand on his shoulder
Saint's Cross that spirit be purer and bolder.
I, I, Ferrara, priest of a temple!

I am Ferrara, maker of swords.
I am the mid-wife, the nurse, and the teacher,
The priest and the preacher.
I, I, Ferrara, maker of swords!

J. B. Salmond.

The Gate of Departure

At Panmure House, near Dundee, is a Western Gate, which has not been opened since James, Fourth Earl, passed through it on his way to take part in the Jacobite rising of 1715. It will open again only to a Stuart king.

O, sun and shade, and wind and rain,
O, night and day—and death amain
And times that shall not be again!

They parted by yon gentle mound,
Where still the mouldering urn is seen,
And all around seemed holy ground
Because of what had been:
O, rain and wind, and wind and rain,
Old times that ne'er return again.

Here first they came when as a bride
He brought her to his stately home;
Here 'neath the trees at even-tide
The twain were wont to roam;
O, pleasure past, O, present pain,
O, joys that ne'er shall be again.

He held her weeping on his breast,
And strove her sad heart to beguile:
"Return we from this regal quest
In but a little while."
O, brave hearts stilled, and stilled in vain!
O, king who ne'er shall come again.

"Adieu!" he cried, "sweet heart of luve,"
Then joined his waiting cavalcade;
But aye he turned and waved his glove,
As they rode through the glade;
O, bit and curb and bridle rein,—
But he shall never come again.

She heard the hinges' sullen groan,
She heard the iron bar complain;
The gateway closed; she made a moan,
"Barr'd let this gate remain,
In rain and wind, in wind and rain,
Until my Luve come home again!"

The sullen clangour of the gate;
Then in her heart was shut a door;
"Alas! Alack! if air or late
He should return no more?
Come darkest night—come death amain,
My Luve shall ne'er return again."

The mouldering urn, the little mound,
The gaunt gate reddening unto rust,
The pleasaunce, and the stately ground,
The stirring fir-trees' sombre sound—
And they who loved—but dust.

O, sun and shade, and wind and rain,
And falling leaf and ripening grain;
And night and day—and death amain;
And nought avails—for all is vain!

Joseph Lee.

The Stirrup Cup

Lady, whose ancestor
Fought for Prince Charlie,
Met once and nevermore,
No time for parley!

Yet drink a glass with me
"Over the water";
Memories pass to me,
Chieftain's granddaughter!

"Say, will he come again?"
Nay, lady, never.
"Say, will he never reign?"
Yea, lady, ever.

Yea, for the heart of us
Follows Prince Charlie;
There's not a part of us
Bows not as barley

Under the breeze that blew
Up the Atlantic
Wafting the one, the true
Prince, the romantic,

Back to his native land
Over the water:
Here's to Prince Charlie and
Lochiel's granddaughter!

Douglas Ainslie.

Lone Places of the Deer

Lone places of the deer,
Corrie, and Loch, and Ben,
Fount that wells in the cave,
Voice of the burn and the wave,
Softly you sing and clear
Of Charlie and his men!

Here has he lurked, and here
The heather has been his bed,
The wastes of the islands knew
And the Highland hearts were true
To the bonny, the brave, the dear,
The royal, the hunted head.

Andrew Lang.

The Princess of Scotland

"Who are you that so strangely woke,
And raised a fine hand?"
Poverty wears a scarlet cloke
In my land.

"Duchies of dreamland, emerald, rose,
Lie at your command?"
Poverty like a princess goes
In my land.

"Wherefore the mask of silken lace
Tied with a golden band?"
Poverty walks with wanton grace
In my land.

"Why do you softly, richly speak
Rhythm so sweetly-scanned?"
Poverty hath the Gaelic and Greek
In my land.

"There's a far-off scent about you seems
Born in Samarkand."
Poverty hath luxurious dreams
In my land.

"You have wounds that like passion-flowers you hide:
I cannot understand."
Poverty hath one name with Pride
In my land.

"Oh! Will you draw your last sad breath
'Mid bitter bent and sand?"
Poverty only begs from Death
In my land.

Rachel Annand Taylor.

Cavalcade

Down the white road
  I see them ride,
Their bright swords jangling
  At their side.

They passed me once,
  Now three years gone,
And then I saw
  One face alone;

But now that face
  Is lost, and I
Can see the others
  Riding by.

Lady Margaret Sackville.

The Little Ships

"The small steamer —— struck a mine yesterday and sank. The crew perished."—Daily paper, 1916.

Who to the deep in ships go down
  Great marvels do behold,
But comes the day when some must drown
  In the grey sea and cold.
For galleons lost great bells do toll,
  But now must we implore
God's ear for sunken Little Ships
  Who are not heard of more.

When ships of war put out to sea
They go with guns and mail,
That so the chance may equal be
Should foemen them assail;
But Little Ships men's errands run
And are not clad for strife;
God's mercy then on Little Ships
Who cannot fight for life.

To warm and cure, to clothe and feed
They stoutly put to sea,
And since that men of them had need
Made light of jeopardy;
Each in her hour her fate did meet
Nor flinched nor made outcry;
God's love be with the Little Ships
Who could not choose but die.

To friar and nun, and every one
Who lives to save and tend,
Sisters were these whose work is done
And cometh thus to end;
Full well they knew what risk they ran
But still were strong to give;
God's grace for all the Little Ships
Who died that men might live.

Hilton Brown.

Lament for Macleod of Raasay

Allan Ian Og Macleod of Raasay,
Treasure of mine, lies yonder dead in Loos,
His body unadorned by Highland raiment,
Trammelled, for glorious hours, in Saxon trews.
Never man before of all his kindred
Went so apparelled to the burial knowe,
But with the pleated tartan for his shrouding,
The bonnet on his brow.

My grief! that Allan should depart so sadly,
When no wild mountain pipe his bosom wrung;
With no one of his race beside his shoulder,
Who knew his history and spoke his tongue.
Ah! lonely death and drear for darling Allan!
Before his ghost had taken wings and gone,
Loud would he cry in Gaelic to his gallants,
"Children of storm, press on!"

Beside him, when he fell there in his beauty,
Macleods of all the islands should have died;
Brave hearts his English!—but they could not fathom
To what old deeps the voice of Allan cried,
When in that strange French countryside, war-battered,
Far from the creeks of home and hills of heath,
A boy, he kept the old tryst of his people
With the dark girl Death.

O Allan Ian Og! O Allan aluinn!
Sore is my heart remembering the past,

And you of Raasay's ancient gentle children
The farthest-wandered, kindliest and last.
It should have been the brave dead of the islands
That heard ring o'er their tombs your battle-cry,
To shake them from their sleep again, and quicken
Peaks of Torridon and Skye!

Gone in the mist the brave Macleods of Raasay!
Far furth from fortune, sundered from their lands;
And now the last grey stone of Castle Raasay
Lies desolate and levelled with the sands;
But pluck the old isle from its roots deep planted
Where tides cry coronach round the Hebrides,
And it will bleed of the Macleods lamented,
Their loves and memories!

Neil Munro.

Home-Thoughts from Abroad

Aifter the war, says the papers, they'll no be content at hame,
The lads that hae feucht wi' death twae 'ear i' the mud and the rain and the snaw;
For aifter a sodger's life the shop will be unco tame;
They'll ettle at fortune and freedom in the new lands far awa'.

No me!
By God! No me!
Aince we hae lickit oor faes
And aince I get oot o' this hell,
For the rest o' my leevin' days
I'll mak a pet o' mysel'.

I'll haste me back wi' an eident fit
And settle again in the same auld bit.
And oh! the comfort to snowk again
The reek o' my mither's but-and-ben,
The wee box-bed and the ingle neuk
And the kail-pat hung frae the chimley-heuk!
I'll gang back to the shop like a laddie to play,
Tak doun the shutters at skreigh o' day,
And weigh oot floor wi' a carefu' pride,
And hear the clash o' the countraside.
I'll wear for ordinar' a roond hard hat,
A collar and dicky and black cravat.
If the weather's wat I'll no stir ootbye
Wi'oot an umbrella to keep me dry.
I think I'd better no tak a wife—
I've had a' the adventure I want in life.—
But at nicht, when the doors are steeked, I'll sit,
While the bleeze loups high frae the aiken ruit,
And smoke my pipe aside the crook,
And read in some douce auld-farrant book;
Or crack wi' Davie and mix a rummer,
While the auld wife's pow nid-nods in slum'er;
And hark to the winds gaun tearin' bye
And thank the Lord I'm sae warm and dry.

When simmer brings the lang bricht e'en,
I'll daunder doun to the bowling-green,
Or delve my yaird and my roses tend
For the big floo'er-show in the next back-end.
Whiles, when the sun blinks aifter rain,
I'll tak my rod and gang up the glen;
Me and Davie, we ken the püles
Whaur the troot grow great in the howes o' the hills;

And, wanderin' back when the gloamin' fa's
And the midges dance in the hazel shaws,
We'll stop at the yett ayont the hicht
And drink great wauchts o' the scented nicht,
While the hoose lamps kin'le raw by raw
And a yellow star hings ower the Law.
Davie will lauch like a wean at a fair
And nip my airm to mak certain shüre
That we're back frae yon place o' dule and dreid,
To oor ain kind warld—

But Davie's deid!
Nae mair gude nor ill can betide him.
We happit him doun by Beaumont toun,
And the half o' my he'rt's in the mools aside him.

John Buchan.

SONNET

We thought to find a cross like Calvary's,
And queened proud England with a diadem
Of thorns. Impetuous armies clamouring
For war, from the far utterance of the seas
We sprang, to win a new Jerusalem.
Now is our shame, for we have seen you fling
Full-sounding honour from your lips like phlegm
And bargain up our souls in felonies.

O England, it were better men should read,
In dusty chronicles, of how a death
Had found thee in the van of these crusades;
To tell their eager sons with bated breath,
And burning eyes, about a golden deed,
A vanished race, and high immortal Shades.

Frederick Victor Branford.

The Thinkers

We do not fight with swords,
  Red iron, explosive fire,
And on no battle-field
  Urge we our soul's desire—
Nay, but our bitter might
  Silent and shod like Peace,
Shall set your homes alight
  In the fullness of your ease.
Strike us, we strike not back,
  But o'er the bloodless sod
Come thundering on our track
  The batteries of God.

We slay you with a thought;
  We wound you with a word;
We stab you to the heart
  Who have abjured the sword.
Your strength has trampled down
  Our weakness underfoot;
The king has saved his crown,
  The scaffold bears its fruit.
Our lips are silenced—yet
  The word we spoke lives on;
The thing ye would forget
  Is the thing already done.

Oh! victors, have ye bound
  Our bodies? That is good.
But ye seek to bind in vain
  The thought not understood.

Not this year or the next
  Shall we be justified;
Enough that we perplexed
  Your minds before we died.
This shall suffice our need:
  That one swift word once said
Shall later be your creed;
  And other men lie dead.

Lady Margaret Sackville.

Dead-Sea Fruit

(FROM THE ENGLISH DOGS IN INDIA TO THEIR BROTHERS AT HOME)

They told us we would ride on elephants
  And sleep on Persian dyes,
That Indian kings would bring us regal meats,
That people would salute us in the streets—
  And many other lies;
So we came out, thinking, poor ignorants,
  We sailed for Paradise.

We ride upon no elephants; we run
  Deep in the stinging dust;
No man salutes us—nay, they are afraid,
They draw aside from us; their minds are made
  Of terror and mistrust;
We walk on chains with servants in the sun,
  Because, it seems, we must.

No rajahs bring us offerings of food;
We live on rice and bone,
And in this country meat is always lean
And dry, and decent milk is never seen,
And we must eat alone;
By Persian rugs, it seems, was understood
A cheerless floor of stone.

This is a country where things cannot play—
They bite and sting and kill;
If pi-dogs touch you, masters get annoyed
And say that you will have to be destroyed,
And so, alas! you will;
Then pi-dogs give you cheek and run away;
We like it very ill.

From time to time they send us to the Hills;
This would be well enough,
But Master, it appears, must stay below
And cannot see us. Brothers, as you know,
Dogs find that *very* rough;
If we stay down they give us draughts and pills—
"Benbow" and similar stuff.

Why don't we chuck it? Well, we don't suppose
Masters can find it fun;
Some reason that we cannot understand
Keeps them shut up in this infernal land
They otherwise would shun;
As for deserting, everybody knows
It simply isn't done.

Ah, brothers, when they come to you and vow,
Be you more circumspect;
Their words are but imposing on your youth,
And that is why we tell you here the truth,
Faithful and unbedecked;
Follow you must—*noblesse oblige*—but *now*
You know what to expect.

Hilton Brown.

Immortality

A TRUMPET cries under the still stars.
I know not whence its ring, nor whence in the deep of my heart
Rises an obstinate, froward longing to burst the bars
Of prudence and of right, and to bear a part
In all high lovely strife for hopes forlorn,
And perish utterly, utterly in the gates of morn.

I know not whence—for I hold convictions dear
(The wrong of slaughter, the might of lowly love)
'Gainst all gainsayers. Yet now I only hear
The blood shout in my bursting veins, above
All that Commanded Good that fools deride,
And I betray by impulse and by pride.

I will be gone before the break of day;
The lost cause calls me sooner than the true,
Far sooner than the safe. Perchance I obey
Some old religious rapture my forbears knew,
The problem unresolved but by this test—
"Whoever saves his life hath missed Life's best."

To die for error . . . rather than, being right,
To rot or slumber or grow wise in my ease,
—False doctrine, doubtless; be it so. I fight,
And no reward but sacrifice would seize;
My one strange hope to swell some day the flying
Imperious call in that sad blown trumpet crying.

W. H. Hamilton.

In the Long Run

Let not the edge of thy desire be dulled
But back thy purpose with a will like steel;
Wrench off the hand of Fortune from the wheel,
Assume the helm or e'er the seas be lulled:
Then let the vessel of thy fate be hulled
With lightning, prowed with adamant, and seal
Thy godlike arrogance by making reel
Backward the blasts, their buffets disannulled.

So shalt thou gain the goal of thy desire,
Howe'er the shrieking eddying Norns deride
And circumscribe thy path with flickering fire.
Make Hope thy slave, Knowledge thy cherubin!
In the long run thou canst not choose but win
The sheltered fairway and the following tide!

Victor F. Murray.

God's Fools

Let me stand with the Conquered who assayed
A greater thing than sane men can imagine
Or pious hearts believe. Some love of Death
Seized all their being and hurl'd them against the World;
And mocking all Intelligence they fell.

Such full abandonment possessed their spirit
That they contemned all prizes ever Man won,
All works accomplisht, lives by men achieved,
And vied with the Creator to make death
Impossibly the glory of all the glories.

Were they in love with Failure from the first
Because there is no new thing in Success
For praise to the high gods? nor reckoned once
If there be flaws in failure, or if tears
Should o'er their broken bodies be misspended?

The holy Master of men found nought in prowess
And so was lowly—and little to rejoice in
Among the reputable, so He poured
On reprobates His molten gold of friendship
And wooed the Crucifixion heaven adores.

O, what tame worship could such a Rebel brook?
Claims He not some defiance for His meed
Of things held fixt and legal and secured,
Passionate avowals that none else dare approve,
And hearts that cannot deign to be victorious?

Colossal dignities and decoration
Are not for the heroes. There's no soul can live
That will not spurn the Universe, and Salvation
Here and hereafter, and even the life of the soul
Till all be emptied and it lie with the Conquered.

W. H. Hamilton.

A Loch in the Hills

Why must I seek your tremblings out,
Who should have done with trembling things,
And why do your guessed whisperings
Through garrulous days persist like doubt?

I strive for prowess, and I find
'Tis less than any blushing stone
That trims your pale and lonely zone,
Where each least wavelet leaves behind

Some hue that only he shall note—
Some song that only he shall have—
Who trails wild Beauty to her cave,
Nor fears her leap towards his throat.

Hugh P. F. McIntosh.

THE OPEN

III

THE OPEN

For all humble, hurt, and hunted things, the Scot has tenderness and adoring sentiment. Who could resist Mr. Hilton Brown's dogs? But even the silly sheep stir the Scottish heart, that finds itself so like the straying sheep, no less than the nobler creatures and the birds of heaven. Akin to this is the love of Nature, especially in its sterner, wilder aspects, high above beauty; and withal a ruthless indignation over the denial by man to man of the bounty Nature so abundantly purveys. In the open also he takes his pleasure, be it at golf or at poaching or by rivers of mirth or gloom.

Scotland

Here in the uplands
The soil is ungrateful;
The fields, red with sorrel,
Are stony and bare.
A few trees, wind-twisted—
Or are they but bushes?—
Stand stubbornly guarding
A home here and there.

Scooped out like a saucer,
The land lies before me,

The waters, once scattered,
Flow orderedly now
Through fields where the ghosts
Of the marsh and the moorland
Still ride the old marches,
Despising the plough.

The marsh and the moorland
Are not to be banished;
The bracken and heather,
The glory of broom,
Usurp all the balks
And the fields' broken fringes,
And claim from the sower
Their portion of room.

This is my country,
The land that begat me.
These windy spaces
Are surely my own.
And those who here toil
In the sweat of their faces
Are flesh of my flesh
And bone of my bone.

Hard is the day's task—
Scotland, stern Mother!—
Wherewith at all times
Thy sons have been faced—
Labour by day,
And scant rest in the gloaming
With want an attendant
Not lightly outpaced.

Yet do thy children
Honour and love thee,
Harsh is thy schooling
Yet great is the gain:
True hearts and strong limbs,
The beauty of faces
Kissed by the wind
And caressed by the rain.

Alexander Gray.

Love in Absence

To-day you walk a London street
While noisy traffic surges by,
With stony pavements for your feet,
And houses crowding out the sky.

Your weary brain is filled with schemes
That with your hurried steps keep pace,
Committees leave no time for dreams,
The London look is on your face.

The roads I walk are country-sweet,
And robins sing as I pass by,
Gold beech leaves rustle round my feet,
Mountains are blue against blue sky.

Yet Love has so constrained us two
These many years increasingly,
My thoughts are there in town with you,
And yours are walking here with me.

You catch the belling of the deer,
You see the road mount white and hilly,
And in this moorland peace I hear
The rush and roar of Piccadilly.

Mabel V. Irvine.

Turn Again . . .

Do not take me, Stranger,
I am not free!
The old gods of the mountain
Have a lien on me.

And when your mates ask you,
Will you dare say,
"The sons of Cytherea
Have stolen her away"?

For when on Dion's mountain
The first hound calls
There'll be no keeping me
In these four walls!

Muriel Stuart.

Invocation

Oh! glen of mine
The only shrine
In which I bend in adoration;
Decked in light blue,
And purple too,

Heather and bluebells of my nation.
Bracken uncurls
Its snaky whorls
In spring upon the moorlands airy;
In autumn cold
It dies in gold
And bronze, a bed for any fairy.
The curlew cries
As low it flies
Sorrowing o'er the lonely places;
The burns in spate
Are swift as Fate
And babble of forgotten races.
The river sings
Of deep hid springs
From which it draws its life, the rover;
The breezes sigh
As they pass by
Breathing their soul out in white clover.
A world of bees
In the lime trees
Are robbing the green-yellow flowers;
The wild rose frail
Its thorny trail
Waves, and looks up to catch the showers.
The wild geese cry
And rend the sky
With their fierce protest at the weather.
A sparrow brown
Is chasing down
The path, a wind-blown white hen's feather.
So melody
Is made for me

By all the glen life as it passes;
The bruised fern's scent
As on I went
Was incense for a hundred masses.
Oh! glen of mine
The only shrine
In which I bend in adoration,
Extend to me
The liberty
Of dreams, the birthright of my nation.

Mary E. Boyle.

Home

Back to England: I wish I could be there
When you return! to see your glad proud eyes
Ranging the cool green fields and kind, home skies—
Chasing the glimpsing roads running nowhere
That one can see or tell: unless from Care!
My heart would leap with yours in fond surprise
To see again how every turn and rise
Tells of a land beyond all others fair.

Oh! would I were beside when you return,
For something in your heart will flow afresh
And in your step new lightsomeness be seen;

When you come home and see the white cliffs spurn
The false-lipt sea, and feel the loving mesh
Of kindred things, where home is sweet and green.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

Heaven

If ever I get to Heaven—
And it may be I shall get there—
I shall steal away from the endless harping
And the city's ceaseless glare.

I trust there will be many mansions,
And a land that stretches afar,
With bog and moor and wild waste places
Where only the red deer are.

Then will I choose in some valley
A little town, so small
That men in the market-place looking upward
Can see the ripe grain fall.

And there will be a river
Set in the midst of the town;
And idle men leaning over the bridges
Will watch the eels go down,

Down, with an aching and hunger
That no man knows or feels,
To a vast uncharted bottomless ocean
That teems with upright eels.

Alexander Gray.

The Wanderer's Wish

Reprinted from "Wild Drumalbain: The Road to Meggernie and Glen Coe."

Oak leaves for my pillow,
  Larch boughs overhead;
A peace and contentment—
  And moss for my bed.

Birds' songs when I waken,
  Soft dews for mine eyes;
Sweet grass for my footsteps—
  And bright, azure skies.

A blithe lark at noontide
  To carol on high;
And bees in the sunlight
  That go humming by.

And glow-worms with lanterns,
  Blue flowers for my breast;
And faeries to kiss me,
  And lull me to rest.

The scent of the soft breeze
  Where night's shadows creep;
And doves in the pine-trees
  To coo me to sleep.

Alasdair Alpin MacGregor.

Ultima Thule

She thought in Gaelic. All her English speech
Was slow and halting, with a sibilance
Of hiss on hiss. She spoke as through thick wool;
Stammering idly, like the lap of waves
You hearken after in some woodland pool
Mist-shrouded, hear at last beat faint and low.
She looked afar as though nought near could know
Eyes sick with longing for wild wind-swept space;
Looked till the dull look faded from her face
And, where her dreams danced, danced her pent soul too.
Stupid she seemed, and dour, and soft and still,
Moved by an alien, deep, instinctive will,
Having no words to tell her grief and pain,
Her horror of this town. She left her bed
One night unslept in, sought and found the quays,
A boat for Lewis, and sailed home again.

Janetta I. W. Murray.

Islands of Mist

I hear the throbbing of waters that break upon lonely
shores,
And the sigh of the wind in the hills where the
heather is growing;
And old dead faded faces look out from the open doors,
Far away in the glens, where, ever, in dreams, my
soul is going.

Far away in the mountains, far at the back of the seas,
Where the soul goes groping slow, like a blind man feeling
For the latch that is rust and dust, long since blown over the leas,
Lost in the love forgotten by loch and sheiling.

It's a song of the dead they're singing, away by the rocks and sand,
Down by the silent place where the loved are sleeping;
And the young and the old together are lying like tired ones hand in hand;
And the only song is the sea's sad song, bitter, alone and weeping.

Far away in the mountains, far where the fathers lie,
Who shall blame us if ever our hearts must roam,
Hearing in towns the wash of the waves that break on the shores of Skye—
Far away, where the West is waiting her children turning home.

Lauchlan MacLean Watt.

Grey Galloway

I LIE and dream about the waking light
In this grey Galloway land so bleak and sere;
And figures of another age appear
From clan and hamlet girt with magic might;
Wild men pass freely, haggard as at night
The shadows move in mist: yet sign of fear
Is not upon their faces; but austere
And proud as kings they gather for the fight.

The years go by, and still both moor and mount
Wear their memorials of a sterner day:
Here age and death are held of no account,
The moors have led the centuries astray,
And deep life breaks in me a sudden fount,
Silent as light in old grey Galloway.

Thomas S. Cairncross.

Sea-Music

Reprinted from "Summer Days Among the Western Isles."

Listen to the frozen wind that comes from northern lands,
With his ice-tinged pulse and his uninviting roar:
Hearken to the breakers as they spill upon the sands,
And dash themselves in splinters round the wrack-reefed shore.
O, there's music in the wind and there's music in the sea;
And the rapture of the tide is putting love on me!

There's music in the cavern where the Viking rievers dwelled
'Mid their rich sea-spoil, that lay strewn upon its floor;
While their galleys, treasure-laden with the wander-lust of eld,
Rocked restlessly at anchor round the foam-laved shore.
O, there's music in the wind; but the shingling of the sea
And the lapping of the tide are putting sleep on me!

Alasdair Alpin MacGregor.

The Road

There are some that love the Border-land and some the Lothians wide,
And some would boast the Neuk o' Fife and some the banks o' Clyde,
And some are fain for Mull and Skye and all the Western Sea;
But the Road that runs by Atholl will be doing yet for me.

The Road it runs by Atholl and climbs the midmost brae
Where Killiecrankie crowns the pass with golden woods and gay;
There straight and clean 'twas levelled where the Garry runs below
By Wade's red-coated soldiery two hundred years ago.

The Road it strikes Dalwhinnie where the mountain tops are grey
And the snow lies in the corries from October until May;
Then down from bleak Ben Alder by Loch Ericht's windswept shore
It hastes by Dalnaspidal to the howes of Newtonmore.

The Road it runs through Badenoch, and still and on it rings
With the riding of the clansmen and a hundred echoings;

Oh, some they rode for vengeance and some for gear
and gain,
But some for bonnie Charlie rode, and came not home
again.

The Road it runs by Alvie—you may linger if you list
To gaze on Ben Muich-Dhuie and the Larig's cup of
mist;
There are pines in Rothiemurchus like a gipsy's dusky
hair,
There are birch-trees in Craigellachie like elfin silver-
ware.

The Road it runs to Forres, and it leaves the hills
behind,
For the roving winds from Morayshire have brought
the sea to mind;
But still it winds to northward in the twilight of the day,
Where the stars shine down at evening on the bonny
haughs of Spey.

Oh, there's some that sing of Yarrow stream, Traquair
and Manor-side,
And some would pick the Neuk o' Fife, and some the
banks o' Clyde;
And some would choose the Pentlands, Cauldstaneslap
to Woodhouselee,
But the Road that runs by Atholl will be doing yet for
me!

Christine Orr.

LOVE'S LAST REQUEST

As the first Bard of Clan Alpin since the resuscitation of the name of MacGregor by Act of Parliament in 1774, *after a proscription and persecution that lasted nearly two centuries, the author of this poem has been granted a lair in the old, historic churchyard of Balquhidder, where Rob Roy and some of his kith are buried. The fact that the author's mother was a MacDonald explains the reference to the purple heather; whereas the pine is the emblem of Clan Gregor.*

ON the Braes of fair Balquhidder,
Braes of ever famed renown,
When my mortal race has ended,
Delve my grave and lay me down,
That my dust at last may mingle
With the sod that I have loved
Through the changing moods of fortune,
Or where'er my footsteps roved.

Other loves have flourished, vanished,
Leaving scarce a trace behind;
Having lived their day, they faded
Like a shadow from my mind:
Far from so the love of country,
Of the lakes and mountains blue,
Which, the more the world I wandered,
Only strong and stronger grew.

On it spread no flimsy roses,
Fresh and fragrant though they bloom,
Since they're not the tribal emblems
That should grace my Highland tomb:

Place instead some purple heather,
  Plant a sprig of stately pine,
For they're both supremely loyal,
  And, by birthright, both are mine!

John MacGregor, Colonel
(Hon. Bard of Clan Gregor).

A Waterfall

Upon the rugged jaws of rocks
  In parried strength the torrents fuse,
And hesitant, with bulbous swell,
  They roll their mighty, lumbering thews:
From majesty of flood and showers
Man caught the sense of primal powers.

Far down the gorge the waters stream
  And tapestry of gleams imbue,
And through the gush of rock-combed waves
  The sun streamed wonderful to view:
From ecstasy of greens and blues
Man caught the tint of primal hues.

'Mid thund'rous pomp of heavy drums
  The waters clash upon the ground,
And foam, spray, swirling eddy-pools,
  Provide a plenitude of sound:
From melodies incised on stones
Man caught the pitch of primal tones.

J. L. Foxworthy.

To a Gypsy Girl on Farragon

The black-thorn broke in April to the birth
Of her white children. Where we met, your eyes
Were gold-brown tarns of sunshine, tears and mirth;
Your hands, thrush-mother wings in ecstasies
Around the newly-born. You looked at me
In shy defiance. But my thoughts you knew;
And so in grave sweet bliss
We stood together by the black-thorn tree,
Children of one hill-mother, her milk dew
Splashing our minds to a wild happiness.

Brown were you as peat-water, but the blood
Of the bell-heather whispered in your face.
Yours were the eyes of Eilid, and you stood
Straight as a fir. Your movings held the grace
Of Etive yews in wind. A tartan shawl,
Its sett all wild with story, clung around
Your shoulders slim and strong,
Whereon your hair showered like a waterfall.
Oh, you were all the best of highland ground—
A wind, a tree, an old romance, a song!

Your hand I might have taken in my hand,
And we had to some earth-dawn melody,
Made by a morning wind in forest land,
Hymned the great sun, or where the mist-wreaths lay
Like swooning dreams above Schiehallion's head
We two had gazed in throbbing silences,
And with one long deep breath
Taken our way o'er hills mist-carpeted
To some far Tir-nan-og of wind-washed days,
And left the measured things to their own death.

There in the energy of fresh cool dawn
We should have run like deer across the hill,
Drank in our bodies all the noon-day sun,
And where the deep pools lay all vigour chill
We should have vied with Dobhrain in the race
Along the water-paths. We should have sung
In dying suns together
Long songs remembered from the first of days,
Till sleep with mist of dreams had found us flung
Deep breathing in the bosom of the heather.

I left you by the thorn-buds. Where the track
Clasped the hill shoulder, came I on your kin;
Your mother with a baby on her back,
Dirty and sunken, lustreless and thin,
Whining for pence; the others of the brood
With tutored plea of hunger; and behind
Sullen and sodden still
From stale carouse, eyes shifty, red and lewd,
The father of your being, dead in mind
To all the beauty of the morning hill.

So written is your story. There shall come
One who shall kiss the beauty from your face,
And you shall wander down the long years dumb,
And deaf, and sightless in the queer disgrace
That men call circumstance. With less excuse,
In that I know, I too seek chains again,
Yet with one wondering
When you are old and worn and bleared and loose,
If tears and smiles will bathe your vision when
The black-thorn bursts to whiteness in the spring.

J. B. Salmond.

Snow

I think each flake a silence is—
So silently it falls;
A white-winged sigh from quietude
Whence no man comes or calls.

And all around the silence is—
O, all around the hush
Of calm unbroken silences
Fall'n from the deeper hush.

Cyril G. Taylor.

Convalescent

Once more the rapture of the wind and rain,
And rich scent of the warm, damp, broken mould;
And I, who never thought to see again
The white snow leave the fallow and the fold,
Or the dark rook wheel elm-ward to his tower,
Am out before the first white lily flower,
And long before the summer and the bee;
While like a dim far-distant dream to me,
Behind the curtain-shadow of my bed
Death calls his hounds to leash, discomfited.

Will H. Ogilvie.

Ode to Evening

Pale daughter of wan Earth and setting Sun,
I bring thee laurel, and the hyacinth flower,
And cypress leaves that Sorrow hath undone
From woven bands that lie in Beauty's bower;
I place them at thy feet, O Even mild!
And, as a worshipper in olden days
In Thracian valleys where the grape grew wild
Gave to thine altar praise,
I come to thee; and like a little child
I dare upturn mine eyes unto thy heavenly ways.

How many moons my mind and heart had gone
Beneath the empillar'd dark of heavy Time,
The House of Man grown like a trampled lawn
Where awful beasts made revel in the Prime!
I knew not of the Peace that from thine eyes
Dropped like a woven snow upon the Earth;
A dread unrest made havoc of the skies
And crushed to dust all mirth;
Wisdom and Love in cloaks of sullied dyes
Went clad, and Lust presided at the bed of birth.

"Of what avail," I cried, "Man's cautious Mind
That tunnels into Matter like a mole,
Or steps upon the atoms of the wind,
And picks the gems of Iris' aureole?
Hath it not been a bauble for the play
Of creatures thrown to Freedom by the trees?

A little dust sun-whitened by the day
And tossed up by the breeze?
An instrument in deadly Evil's pay?
A haunter of dank sepulchres and bone-strewn leas?"

"And Love," cried I again, from pool of tears,
"What hath he been unto the House of Man?
A canker at the root of growing years,
A Gorgon-headed thing, of visage wan.
The Dæmon of the Sun hath drawn his sword
And cut away the glory of Love's wings;
From youth and maid there trembles no mild word
Of blue transtellar things;
Decaying Flesh hath loosed his wolfish horde
And made red havoc round the throne of mental kings!"

But here, upon my knees at thy pale feet,
There cometh, like a dove from heaven, Peace;
And from the East, with soft unhastening beat,
The azure wings of Love come nigh, and cease;
And noble as the Angel of the Stars
That led the Song of Wonder when dread Space
Swung forth the Universe upon his bars,
Mind cometh to this place;
And like three Spirits whom no Matter mars
We raise united eyes unto thy tranquil face.

Into thine eyes the Sons of Men have gazed
Since first the Star of Vision kissed the Sea,
Since first the Lamb of God on Zion grazed,
Since Mind and Love sang forth in harmony;
And thou shalt be the burden of their song
Till Time and Space close down atomic doors,

Till Life is loosened from the solar thong
And walks celestial floors,
Till Joy and Sorrow are a golden gong,
And Nature builds her rainbow by eternal shores.

William Jeffrey.

The Seed-Shop

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless dry,
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

Dead that shall quicken at the trump of Spring,
Sleepers to stir beneath June's splendid kiss,
Though birds pass over, unremembering,
And no bee seek here roses that were his.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams,
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust
That will drink deeply of a century's streams;
These lilies shall make Summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells a million roses leap;
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

Muriel Stuart.

Lilies

The solid world of sense dissolves away;
The forest swoons; the mountains swing and sway;
The sea becomes a blue amorphous mist,
Like vapours of a melted amethyst;
The whole round globe is as a bubble blown;
Nothing seems real save your soul alone.
For through your lucent eyes our dazzled sight
Espies the glimmer of immortal light;
And through your eyelid lilies sees enshrined
The deathless lilies of Eternal Mind,
And all things seem unreal and untrue
Beside the bright apocalypse of you.

Ronald Campbell Macfie.

The Festival of the Cherry

See where the temple of the Spring doth rear
Its trellised arch of white and green to-day!
Against the rain-washed blue how silver-clear
The glistening wreaths that twine each slender spray!

But though the loaded boughs may raise on high
Their cluster'd snows, nor fear the sun to greet,
Yet all those flower-faces, soft and shy,
Look downward toward the green earth at our feet.

So that an angel, flying far above,
In all the glory of the sunset's glow,
Would see but half the beauty that we love
Who pass along the dusty road below.

Muriel Elsie Graham.

Hawthorn-Time

O girls upon these Scottish roads,
By glen and tree,
In far-succeeding Junes whose buds
I will not see,
I loved your mothers, and (though sleep
Is on me) back my dreams will creep

To hedgerows white and hawthorn hours
In lanes where you
Take what the scented gloaming dowers,
(As we did too),
And will not know each happy breath
Stores up a sweet can conquer death.

For all my soul is scented soul
And wooing dew
From heavy windless dusks, that stole
Me through and through;
And thrills at hawthorn-time my clay
That's laid just off your evening way.

Robert Crawford.

The Rose

A root in the right soil,
Sun, rain, and a man's toil—
That, as a wise man knows,
Is all there is to a rose.

All there is to a red
Sweet riotous rose, I said.
Wood, weather, man, and clod,
Are these, then, very God?

Orgill Cogie.

The Tulip

Aflame-coloured chalice
Filled with the sun's gold wine,
High on a slender stem it stands,
A beauty wrought by God's own hands,
Part of Himself—divine.
A thing so pure and lovely,
I wonder were men blind
That they should search thro' half the world
With armour on, and flags unfurled
The Holy Grail to find?

Wendy Wood.

High Summer

Oh, Summer, thou art growing old!
The hedges by the road are grey
With ancient dust: the brambles hold
From every bush a blossomed spray.

The clover flowerets fade and droop,
About the pond the cattle wade,
Or stand, a heavy, silent troop,
Beneath the oak-tree's dappled shade.

The thrushes hop across the lawn
  In silence, that were wont to sing:
The blackbird has forgot the dawn,
  The lark has folded up his wing.

The grasses bow their ripened heads,
  The flies hang on the thistle flow'r,
It is the time when summer weds
  With autumn for a languorous hour.

I loiter through the silent land,
  And linger by the shallow brook,
And in the meadows idly stand
  To watch the slowly circling rook.

George Reston Malloch.

Heather

High above the Highland glen
  Flamed and burned the purple heather—
Colours never mixed of men,
  Tints no painter put together;

And I guessed that, where I trod,
  Quaffing his Olympian fill,
Rudely had some reeling god
  Spilt his wine-cup on the hill.

Will H. Ogilvie.

Ampelopsis (Virginia Creeper)

I flaunt no garden flowers,
  Yet leafy thoughts in rhyme
Around thy spirit's towers
  Like ampelopsis climb;
And in Autumnal hours,
  When all the buds are dead,
Will build thee flaming bowers
  With hearts of vermeil red.

Ronald Campbell Macfie.

August

The cows stood in a thunder-cloud of flies
  As lagging through the field with trailing feet
I kicked up scores of skipper butterflies
  That hopped a little way, lazy with heat.

The wood I sought was in deep shelter sunk,
  Though clematis leaves shone with a glossy sweat
And creeping over ground and up tree-trunk
  The ivy in the sun gleamed bright and wet.

Trees with the soot of August suns were black
  Though splashed in places with a bright fire-light;
I praised the dæmon of that dim wood-track
  Where pepper moths were flittering by night.

Songs brief as Chinese poems the birds sung
  And insects of all sheens, blue, brown, and yellow,
Darted and twisted in their flight and hung
  On air that groaned like hoarse sweet violoncello.

No leaf in the least breath of wind was turning
And foliage hung on trees like heavy wigs;
White suns fringed with long rainbow hairs were burning
Inflammable leaves and the light-blackened twigs.

From that small sun patching the wood with light—
O strange to think—hung all things that have breath,
Trees, insects, cows, even moths that fly by night
And man, and life in every form—and death.

A. J. Young.

Autumnal

I have loved Autumn as an amethyst
Set into cunning silver, and her mist
Dimming the golden trees to goblin treasure,
The exquisite slow measure
Of leaf-fall in her visionary rains,
Her brooks, those passionate veins
That rush like rapture in a poet's blood,
I have loved and understood.

What though the sheep upon the distant hills
The first white footfalls of the winter seem?
He lives, who feels this last irradiate gleam,
A thousand summers, and its magic stills
Winter for ever in his heart. I hear
The phœnix-fabled burning of the year,
And summer's soul, a rainbow-feathered ghost,
Soar to that secret coast
Where the unnumbered seasons have their sphere.

Lewis Spence.

Hymn for Harvest-Tide

Now beautifully barley, wheat and oats
  Glister in harvest cloth-of-gold ashine,
And round the fields with musical glad throats
  Birds of the Autumn hymn Thy care divine,
    Most bounteous Lord;
    And we take up the word
  Of glory to the Giver of all good things,
    And each heart sings.

Full with ripe plenty, every meadow's breast
  Breathes of Thine opulent promises all fulfilled,
Sweet plains in yellow and red and silver drest
  To noble praise their loveliness do yield,
    And we take up this word,
    Most bounteous Lord,
  Of glory to the Giver of all good things,
    And each heart sings.

While wind and light weave gentlest symphony
  Floating athwart the radiant swaying corn,
And nimble amber brooks add melody
  Of mirthful descant bird-songs to adorn,
    We raise anew our word,
    Most bounteous Lord,
  Of glory to the Giver of all good things
    And each heart sings.

For increase and full harvest and safe store
  Of provender whereof Thou fashionest all

We, with all things created, less and more,
Thy care benign adore in festival,
Most bounteous Lord;
Yea, we renew that word
Of glory to the Giver of all good things,
And each heart sings.

Hearts glad to be alive and thankful minds
And quiet fancy bring we, and rejoice
In fruit of field, of love and pain, that finds—
After long patience—benediction's voice.
Most bounteous Lord,
To Thee we raise this word
Of glory to the Giver of all good things,
And each heart sings.

W. H. Hamilton.

An October Birthday

The pregnant silence of the passing year
Brooded upon the land with wistful thought
Of naked stubble fields, abandoned nests,
Tear-dropping trees, bare brakes whence birds had flown;
Death swept with trailing robes the woodland aisles,
Most royally vestured, though his broidered skirts
Rustled through eddying heaps of frosted leaves.

But lo! among his train came those who bore
The hoarded grain for February fields,
Or touched the blacken'd boughs with budding wand,
Or covered up with moss the shrinking ferns;

And there was one (I bless the golden hour!)
One from whose arms a nestling child leaned forth,
And sprang into our hearts—an autumn birth.

A maiden now, with hair like russet leaves,
And cheeks that vie with fair Pomona's fruit
Faint silvered with the morning's glistening breath,
Eyes misted o'er with veiling reverie
Like autumn waters stilled and dark and deep,
Upon whose breast the golden leaflets float,
She holds within her arms the secret hopes
Of springs to come, the summer's garnered joys;
And still to us a miracle is she—
Our autumn child—the gift of Life in Death.

Muriel Elsie Graham.

October Snow

Not in a night of tempest, when the sky,
Tatterdemalion, shouting horribly, leans
With twist of phantom fingers in your hair
To tug you hither, thither, toss you hence—
Not so were your brave gestures, splendid limbs,
Broken, my trees—oak, ash and hawthorn, elm,
Chestnut and cherry, and, o'ertopping all,
Nor tree, but leafy seraph—silver birch:
In stillness, hour on hour, soft flakes of snow
Fell, till their slow insistence cracked the thews
That thrust all heaven back and the great winds.

Alister Mackenzie.

Frost

Harder the chill star glints
  O'er the sky's avalanche;
The stark tree colder prints
  Its branch.

No living thing is nigh;
  Only a robin comes
Begging with bright round eye
  The world's crumbs.

And burning on his breast
  While sinks the sun's red gold
He keeps an emblem, lest
  Even his faith grow cold.

Cyril G. Taylor.

The Harebell

You give no portent of impermanence
Though before sun goes you are long gone hence,
Your bright, inherited crown
Withered and fallen down.

It seems that your blue immobility
Has been for ever, and must for ever be.
Man seems the unstable thing,
Fevered and hurrying.

So free of joy, so prodigal of tears;
Yet he can hold his fevers seventy years,
Out-wear sun, rain and frost
By which you are soon lost.

Muriel Stuart.

Claymore!

My heart shall never sleep,
Nor shall my soul be free
Of shadows till our Scotland keep
Her tryst with Liberty.
For this, my unlaurelled pen,
Mother of powerless words,
Shall seek, shall ken, the strength of ten,
A mightier power than swords.

And though my harp be weak
'Twill blossom strings of fire,
Till pulse of passion stir the meek
And hero-songs the byre.
And the stern North shall know
The armed right hand until
The waste be wounded by the plough,
And fleeces flower the hill!

Lewis Spence.

"Consider the Birds"

The Saviour spoke of birds that sing
And whistle on the wind,
Of little lives of chirp and stir,
Of creatures dumbly kind;
Whose tiny wings englossed with light
And feathers sprent with dew
Have spanned the orb of cloud and wave

And sped the forests through;
Whose tendril foot and limber shank
Have poised on many a thorn,
And dapper head and perky bill
Have bid the sun good-morn.
He spoke of creatures happy, bless'd,
Of lives both full and free;
Would we in this bare hermitage
Knew such democracy!

J. L. Foxworthy.

The City Horses

Their fiery spirits tamed, heads meekly bent,
Along the streets the patient horses plod,
Gently submissive to their lot, content
To do man's will, harnessed and ironshod.
They murmur not, although, from dawn until
Night falls, they toil along the dusty road
Or climb, at man's command, the long steep hill
With muscles taut, straining beneath their load.

And if at times for sweet cool grass they long
In green and spacious fields, and shady trees,
For lanes perfumed by hawthorn and wild rose,
They give no sign, but humbly pace along
The hard grey streets, and only He who sees
Into the heart, and reads its secrets, knows.

Helen Myers Meldrum.

Passing Sheep

There's nothing I can do,
Save steel my heart anew,
Though fain to weep when herded sheep parade the city through:
Their weary lagging feet
Strike hard upon the street
Disconsolate and wistful is their timid, gentle bleat.

Mud-stained they huddle by,
With glazed, fear-stricken eye,
Bewildered but submissive at the slaughter-house to die:
To tumult of the town
The flock is driven down
From green, sequestered pasture lands which mighty mountains crown.

Death is of Life the key;
The good God made decree
That little lambs be slain, their Shepherd hanged upon a tree.
These sheep pass not in vain,
Remembrance will remain
To quicken courage for my share of suffering and pain.

Elsie Smeaton Munro.

"Nicky," a Hospital Dog

Small dogs were not permitted
Even in private wards, the edict said;
Yet every afternoon a shadow flitted
Down the long corridors, a little head

Pushed at the door, an eager face came through,
Eyes, ears and tail all shouted "How are *you*?
Your own dog can't come in, but won't I do?"—
And there was Nicky sitting on the bed.

Charity's self was Sister,
Nurses were kind as angels scarce could be;
Yet when the world became one flaming blister
Of pain and life seemed at its perigee,
One sighed for little footsteps pattering near,
For that forbidden figure to appear,
For the brave words that one could almost hear—
"Hi, tails up, cully, tails up! Look at *me*!"

Ah, Nicky, small magician,
Master of arts unpractised in our schools,
Little your race heeds veto or permission
So long as you can help us feckless fools
Of men. Nay, were we in that nether Pit
(Forbid to doggies, or 'twould not be It)
You or your like would struggle through to sit
Beside us there—and devil take the rules!

Hilton Brown.

On a Cat, Ageing

He blinks upon the hearth-rug
And yawns in deep content,
Accepting all the comforts
That Providence has sent.

Louder he purrs, and louder,
In one glad hymn of praise
For all the night's adventures,
For quiet, restful days.

Life will go on for ever,
With all that cat can wish:
Warmth and the glad procession
Of fish and milk and fish.

Only—the thought disturbs him—
He's noticed once or twice,
The times are somehow breeding
A nimbler race of mice.

Alexander Gray.

I. M. "Hamish," a Scotch Terrier

Little lad, little lad, and who's for an airing,
Who's for the river and who's for a run;
Four little pads to go fitfully faring,
Looking for trouble and calling it fun?
Down in the sedges the water-rats revel,
Up in the wood there are bunnies at play
With a weather-eye wide for a Little Black Devil;
But the Little Black Devil won't come to-day.

To-day at the farm the ducks may slumber,
To-day may the tabbies an anthem raise;
Rat and rabbit beyond all number
To-day untroubled may go their ways;
To-day is an end of the shepherd's labour,
No more will the sheep be hunted astray;
And the Irish terrier, foe and neighbour,
Says, "What's old Hamish about to-day?"

Ay, what indeed? In the nether spaces
Will the soul of a Little Black Dog despair?
Will the Quiet Folk scare him with shadow-faces?
And how will he tackle the Strange Beasts there?
Tail held high, I'll warrant, and bristling,
Marching stoutly if sore afraid,
Padding it steadily, softly whistling;—
That's how the Little Black Devil was made.

Then well-a-day for a cantie callant,
A heart of gold and a soul of glee,—
Sportsman, gentleman, squire and gallant,—
Teacher, maybe, of you and me.
Spread the turf on him light and level,
Grave him a headstone clear and true—
"Here lies Hamish, the Little Black Devil,
And half of the heart of his mistress too."

Hilton Brown.

The Caged Bird

"*We think caged birds sing when indeed they cry.*"—Spectator.

Sing, little bird, to keep your heart from breaking,
Beating your wings against your prison-bars.
No more for you the cool of dawns awaking.—
No more for you the stars.

Do you remember when the trees were greening?
How, when you called, another answered you
Flirting her head, her downy feathers preening,
Flinging her golden notes into the blue?

Is it perchance your song is but a crying?
Is it an ache that swells your tiny throat,
An agony of longing, ever trying
To soar up—up—to freedom on each note?

Sing, little bird, to keep your heart from breaking,
Beating your wings against your prison-bars.
No more for you the cool of dawns awaking—
No more for you the stars.

Maimie A. Richardson.

The Fold

WRITTEN TO A SHEEP-DOG

Wearily the mist trails low, and white
Over the wet sky.
You can hear the burns are sucking at
Their courses.
Weariedly the dog, and then the shepherd
Round the corner,
Drag crook and tail.
The sheep are like poor wraiths.
Soon the fire crackles in the cot hid in the shoulder
Of the hill, and warm, wedged fleeces snuggle in the fold.
Where is then the sheep-dog? where his panting? . . .
"He pants no longer."
Does his spirit wander up among the mountain-sides to drink the sucking runlets?
"He climbs no more; scours not now or ever the craggy sheep tracks."

Where is now his spirit? In the cot beside his master?
"No. I see his spirit now. It lies
On the green field
Where the sheep
Are folded—
It is the fold."

Mabel Christian Forbes.

"GLEN," A SHEEP-DOG

I KEN there isna a p'int in yer heid,
I ken that ye're auld an' ill,
An' the dogs ye focht in yer day are deid,
An' I doot that ye've focht yer fill;
Ye're the dourest deevil in Lothian land,
But, man, the he'rt o' ye's simply grand;
Ye're done an' doited, but gie's yer hand
An' we'll thole ye a whilie still.

A daft-like character aye ye've been
Sin the day I brocht ye hame,
When I bocht ye doon on the Caddens green
An' gied ye a guid Scots name;
Ye've spiled the sheep an' ye've chased the stirk,
An' rabbits was mair tae yer mind nor work,
An' ye've left i' the morn an' stopped till mirk,
But I've keepit ye a' the same.

Mebbe ye're failin' an' mebbe I'm weak,
An' there's younger dogs tae fee,
But I doot that a new freen's ill tae seek,
An' I'm thinkin' I'll let them be;

Ye've whiles been richt whaur I've thocht wrang,
Ye've liked me weel an' ye've liked me lang,
An' when there's ane o' us got tae gang—
May the guid Lord mak' it me.

Hilton Brown.

A Song of Life and Golf

The thing they ca' the stimy o't
I find it ilka where!
Ye 'maist lie deid—an unco shot—
Anither's ba' is there!
Ye canna win into the hole,
However gleg ye be,
And aye, where'er ma ba' may roll
Some limmer stimies me!

CHORUS

Somebody stimying me,
Somebody stimying me,
The grass may grow, the ba' may row,
Some limmer stimies me.

I lo'ed a lass, a bonny lass,
Her lips an' locks were reid;
Intil her heart I couldna pass:
Anither man lay deid!
He cam' atween me an' her heart,
I turned wi' tearfu' e'e,
I couldna loft him, I maun part,
The limmer stimied me!

I socht a kirk, a bonny kirk,
  Wi' teind, an' glebe, an' a';
A bonny yaird to feed a stirk,
  An' links to ca' the ba'!
Anither lad he cam' an' fleeched—
  A convartit U.P.—
An' a' in vain ma best I preached,
  That limmer stimied me!

It's aye the same in life an' gowf,
  I'm stimied, late and ear';
This world is but a weary howf,
  I'd fain be itherwhere.
But whan auld Deith wad hole ma corp,
  As sure as Deith ye'll see
Some coof has played the moudiewarp,
  Rin in, an' stimied me!

Andrew Lang.

The Last Chance

Within the streams, Pausanias saith,
  That down Cocytus' valley flow,
Girdling the grey domain of Death,
  The spectral fishes come and go;
The ghosts of trout flit to and fro.
  Persephone, fulfil my wish,
And grant that in the shades below
  My ghost may land the ghosts of fish.

Andrew Lang.

Fisher Jamie

Puir Jamie's killed. A better lad
Ye wadna find to busk a flee
Or burn a püle or wield a gad
Frae Berwick to the Clints o' Dee.

And noo he's in a happier land.—
It's Gospel truith and Gospel law
That Heaven's yett maun open stand
To folk that for their country fa'.

But Jamie will be ill to mate;
He lo'ed nae müsic, kenned nae tünes
Except the sang o' Tweed in spate,
Or Talla loupin' ower its linns.

I sair misdoot that Jamie's heid
A croun o' gowd will never please;
He liked a kep o' dacent tweed
Whaur he could stick his casts o' flees.

If Heaven is a' that man can dream
And a' that honest herts can wish,
It maun provide some muirland stream,
For Jamie dreamed o' nocht but fish.

And weel I wot he'll up and speir
In his bit blate and canty way,
Wi' kind Apostles standin' near
Whae in their time were fishers tae.

He'll offer back his gowden croun
And in its place a rod he'll seek,
And bashfu'-like his herp lay doun
And speir a leister and a cleek.

For Jims had aye a poachin' whim;
He'll süne grow tired, wi' lawfu' flee
Made frae the wings o' cherubim,
O' castin' ower the Crystal Sea. . . .

I picter him at gloamin' tide
Steekin' the backdoor o' his hame
And hastin' to the waterside
To play again the auld auld game;

And syne wi' saumon on his back,
Catch't clean against the Heavenly law,
And Heavenly byliffs on his track,
Gaun linkin' doun some Heavenly shaw.

John Buchan.

Poaching in Excelsis

"*Two men were fined £*120 *a-piece for poaching white rhinoceros.*"—Times of Africa.

I've poached a pickle pairtricks when the leaves were
turnin' sere,
I've poached a twa-three hares an' groose, an' mebbe
whiles a deer,
But ou, it seems an unco thing, an' jist a wee mysterious
Hoo ony mortal could contrive tae poach a rhinocerious.

I've crackit wi' the keeper, pockets packed wi' pheasant's eggs,
An' a ten-pun' saumon hangin' doun in baith my trouser legs,
But eh, I doot effects wud be a wee thing deleterious
Gin ye shuld stow intil yer breeks a brace o' rhinocerious.

I mind hoo me an' Wullie shot a Royal in Braemar,
An' brocht him doun tae Athol by the licht o' mune an' star.
An' eh, Sirs! but the canny beast contrived tae fash an' weary us—
Yet staigs maun be but bairn's play beside a rhinocerious.

I thocht I kent o' poachin' jist as muckle's ither men,
But there is still a twa-three things I doot I dinna ken,
An' noo I canna rest, my brain is growin' that deleerious
Tae win awa' tae Africa an' poach a rhinocerious.

G. K. Menzies.

GLAMOURIE

IV

GLAMOURIE

Above all, there is a daft streak in the Scot, a heart and eye and ear for the macabre and the awesome, for wizardry and mystic doctrine and old superstition, and he will read into the heart of Night and Morning his own ghostly imaginings. He will ever and anon himself break out in rapture or in riot when the same eldritch energy possesses him — and wha's the waur o't? Art has need to be an austere iconoclast on occasion, and in Scotland has been dowered with the scorn of scorn.

Ecstasy

O ye that look on Ecstasy
  The Dancer lone and white,
Cover your charmèd eyes, for she
  Is Death's own acolyte.
She dances on the moonstone floors
Against the jewelled peacock doors:
The roses flame in her gold hair,
The tired sad lids are overfair.
All ye that look on Ecstasy
  The Dancer lone and white
Cover your dreaming eyes, lest she—
(Oh! softly, strangely!—) float you through
These doors all bronze and green and blue
  Into the Bourg of Night.

Rachel Annand Taylor.

Love-Music

Love, what is Love to-night?
So lucent are my dreams, the skies
Descend and share their light.
The Sun, before he dies,
(O foolish rivalries!)
Pierces and lips the night
With his sweet memories.

There is a silence round me in the night.
My thoughts are jewels, set in its vast skies;
Tranquil as distant stars, brighter than light.
Now, when the whisper of the evening dies,
My heart is poised, high on her dreams to-night.
(So lucent are my dreams, the very skies
Descend and share their light.)

There is a hush against my heart to-night:
Magic reflected from the trancèd skies
That drowses on my eyelids. See! the light
Of tenderest blue and gold before it dies
Melts out the world and floods my heart to-night.
(So lucent are my dreams, the skies
Descend and share their light.)

The Sun, before he dies,
(O fusing rivalries!)
Pierces my sleep, and Night
Enfolds her memories.

Mabel Christian Forbes.

Two Island Songs

I. THE WOMEN TO THE SEAFARERS

Furl, seafarers, furl your sails,
No more tempt the clouded seas:
Make not gulls your nightingales
Nor tall masts your cherry trees.

Trust no song the siren sings,
Softly sounding from afar—
Sailors, fold your wind-blown wings
And rest where the true voices are.

Ah, be done! You'll find no lands
So honey-sweet, so fair in flocks;
Only the tides, and sinking sands,
And sorrow brooding on the rocks.

II. ISLAND ROSE

She has given all her beauty to the water;
She has told her secrets to the tidal bell;
And her hair is a moon-drawn net, and it has caught her,
And her voice is in the hollow shell.

She will not come back any more now, nor waken
Out of her island dream where no wind blows:
And only in the small house of the shell, forsaken,
Sings the dark one whose face is a rose.

Hamish Maclaren.

Treasure-Trove

Do you mind rinnin' barefit
In the saft, summer mist,
Liltin' and linkin' on the steep hill-heids?
In below your tartan shawl, your hand wad aye twist
Your bonnie green beads.

Do you mind traivellin', traivellin'
Ower and ower the braes,
Reistlin' the heather, and keekin' 'naith the weeds,
Seekin' and greetin' in the cauld weet days
For yer tint green beads?

Whist! Dinna rouse him,
The auld sleepin' man—
Steek the door; the mune-licht's on the lone hill-heids—
Wee elfin craturs is delvin' in the sand,
They canna' miss the glimmer
O' yer auld green beads.

Here they come, the wee folk,
Speedin' fast and fleet—
There's a queer, low lauchin' on the grey hill-heids—
An' the bricht drops, glancin', following at their feet—
It's green, green beads—
The last ye'll ever see o' yer bonnie green beads.

Marion Angus.

The Spirit

The sunset speaks not, nor the woods;
Yet in their silence cries
The secret voice of olden moods
That deep within me rise.

It gives the silent fields a song,
Old tales to every stone,
And calls the bygone folk along
When I would walk alone.

W. H. Hamilton.

Of Eden

He builded Eden for our souls,
Of silver strands and radiant flowers
Dreamed in the cool of early showers
And leaping light from aureoles:
Then, angels sang to us, or ran
With glittering footsteps, till the sun
Was weary, and night had begun
Its eager marvelling at man.

Since they who shared these youthful things
Are lost to us, the shadows crowd:
We make our sorrowing aloud,
And half forget our ancient wings;
Thinking (poor shrunken men of clay)
This earth of ours a ruinous,
A dark and a neglected house;
And joy a bygone mystery.

James Guthrie.

The Fairy Knowe

The wee win's rin whaur the heich grass grows,
An', black attour the green,
The shadows gang hirplin' on ilka haun'
Wi' the white mune in atween:

An' wha is't rins wi' the win's, onkent,
Wha cries wi' the wee win's cry,
When the shadows are shauchlin', black an' blin',
An' the waukrife mune gangs by . . .

In the eerie 'oor when the little wee win's
Cry in frae an eerie airt,
When Time fa's awa' in a dwam, an' Nicht
Staun's still wi' a lowpin' he'rt?

Margaret Winefride Simpson.

The Hulk

Last night I dreamed that the sea cradled me;
That round my bows the salt waves foamed and dashed,
That shrieking winds flung high the insolent spume
Over my deck to drench my bellying sails;
And as I heaved and trembled to the swell,
My ancient heart remembered, and was glad.
When from among the driving, flying clouds,
An Autumn moon hung low and full and red
Till all my spars stood clear beneath her light—
Then my old heart grew fine again and brave,
And I forgot the mudflats and my shame.

Maimie A. Richardson.

The Wood and the Shore

The low bay melts into a ring of silver,
And slips it on the shore's reluctant finger.
Though in an hour the tide will turn, will tremble,
Forsaking her because the moon persuades him.
But the black wood that leans and sighs above her
No hour can change, no moon can slave or summon.
Then comes the dark; on sleepy, shell-strewn beaches,
O'er long, pale leagues of sand, and cold, clear water
She hears the tide go out towards the moonlight.
The wood still leans . . . weeping she turns to seek
him
And his black hair all night is on her bosom.

Muriel Stuart.

The Back o' Hairst

It's the Back o' Hairst upon Ythanside,
An' the leme o' the rowan's deid
That mindit me i' the mids o' my hairst
Upon hairt-wrung draps o' bluid.

'Twas a' but a puir, scant hairst that I shore,
But I gaithered it wi' a will;
Now I rest my hands on his cross, and pray
Saint Andrew to sain the mill.

May never a mealoch o' bitterness fa'
Frae the mill whaur I grind my corn;
An' may I hain naething o' care or kann
As I bake my breid the morn.

An' I'll licht a can'le the morn's nicht
When I gang to sweet Mary's Shrine,
For, although the leme o' the rowan's deid,
She's lichtit this hairt o' mine.

An' I'll licht anither to God Whase Grace
Ga'e strength to win throu' wi' it a';
Though 'twas hungry lan' that I seedit in,
An' kepit owre miekle snaw.

Jessie Annie Anderson.

The Watergaw

Ae weet forenicht i' the yow-trummle
I saw yon antrin thing,
A watergaw wi' its chitterin' licht
Ayont the on-ding;
An' I thocht o' the last wild look ye gied
Afore ye dee'd!

There was nae reek i' the laverock's hoose
That nicht—an' nane i' mine;
But I hae thocht o' that foolish licht
Ever sin' syne;
An' I think that mebbe at last I ken
What your look meant then.

Hugh M'Diarmid.

Le Mistral

O sea! that holds upon thy tumbling breast
The glowing splendour of so many gems,
Out where thy surging waves are frothed with spume
A million emeralds flame within their depth
And all the gleaming sapphires of the world
Have spilt their souls to make thy wondrous blue;
Opal and amethyst, and onyx stone,
And shower of milky pearls tossed in thy foam—
O sea, and wouldst thou also have my heart?
That is, alas, no jewel: leave me my heart.

Maimie A. Richardson.

The Causeymire

As I was walking in a tire
Of stars along the Causeymire,
As I drew near the place of tombs
Where squeaks the bat and the bittern booms,
By Achavanich's cirque of stones
Where curlews keen o'er a rattle of bones,
I heard—was it a clap of wind
From out the creeping wood behind
Where late I hurried lest the wake
Of steps I took should overtake,
Where late I ran, for the same tree
Was moving step by step with me?
Poised in that gravid interlude
A veering weathercock I stood,

When, blacker than the nether pit,
Two monstrous horses broke from it,
Two horses flung from out the night,
Their gaunt glooms slashed with bracelets bright
Of teeth and glaze of eyes and rheum
Of targèd nostrils, clanging doom
Upon the anvil of the road,
Fetlocked with fire and earthquake-shod;
And in a trice I knew the reek
Of snorted breath upon my cheek,
I saw the livid foam they churned
From champèd bits, and eyes ghast-turned
I' the head at me, thin necks outstretched,
And ears laid back, while something screeched
Above the clangour—was it I?—
Something screeched as they thundered by.
They passed—and, for a palinode,
Behold their ribbèd flanks bestrode
By two riders with elbows spread,
And one was taller by a head;
Against the stars their silhouettes
Bobbed up and down like marionettes;
And on the hunch of the little one Sirius
Rose and set in a dance delirious—
I laughed: and then I saw with grue
Neither the taller of the two:
For one was short, the other tall,
But one—he had no head at all;
And they were wheeling, head and lack,
And—God in heaven!—coming back. . . .

Alister Mackenzie.

The Trance

Lulled by La Belle Dame sans Merci he lies
In the bare wood below the blackening hill.
The plough drives nearer now, the shadow flies
Past him across the plain, but he lies still.

Long since the rust its gardens here has planned,
Flowering his armour like an autumn field.
From his sharp breastplate to his iron hand
A spider's web is stretched, a phantom shield.

When stray feet shake the ground close by his ear
Armies pass through his dream in endless line,
And one by one his ancient friends appear;
They pass all day, but he can make no sign.

When a bird cries within the silent grove
The long-lost voice fleets by; he makes to rise
And follow it; but his limbs do not move,
And on the ground unstirred his shadow lies.

But if a tiny leaf should drift
Across his face and lie, the dread drops start
Chill on his forehead. Now he tries to lift
The insulting weight that stays and breaks his heart.

Edwin Muir.

The Red Cloud

Long past the sunset hour,
And lonely in our sight,
A fiery cloud, red as a poppy flower,
Floated into the night.

And we remembered those,
While yet the cloud had fire,
Who keep upon the open at the close,
Still quick with old desire;

Who pass the village street,
And hear the children shout,
And think the music there divinely sweet,
And hate the going out. . . .

The fire was ebbing cold,
The red was streak'd with white,
The curtain of the sky was fringed with gold,
The moon was growing bright.

O blest, we thought, and wise,
Is he who through his years
Meets every season with a new surprise
Of laughter and of tears;

Gives to his daytime sun
His perishable praise,
And with a good content when day is done,
Moves from his finished ways. . . .

The day was dead, and white,
Like ashes burned low,
Wreath'd round a hill-top in the dim moonlight
The cloud was cold as snow.

John Macnair Reid.

The Mechanical Age

'Twas six upon the farm-house clock,
And almost dark outside.
"What is that noise?" "It is the winds
That whinny as they ride."

"'Tis not the winds that whinny so,
Thou man of volt and steel!
It is a herd of ghostly horse
That once sped plough and wheel.

"They wander through the autumn night,
And soon each tree they knew,
For their great sorrow, shall appear
Clad in their life-blood's hue."

William Jeffrey.

The Cockney's Dream

He heard a voice storm up the falls of song.
A vision flamed across his soul's dark blind.

He saw huge serpents hurrying along,
And a great lion raving in the wind.

On shattered, red, tremendous feet the grim
Ghast ghost of London gaped—and gripped at him.

Frederick Victor Branford.

Sprite's Song

On lonely heights,
Which a faint moon lights,
I fly with the wind, and dance o' nights.
Laughing, I leap
Where the grey clouds sweep
Over the face of the stars asleep.

I have no home,
I go and I come,
Heavy with rain and wet with foam;
When Autumn calls,
And the ripe fruit falls,
I bask on the hot red garden walls.

If you would know
Which way I go,
Light, light, light on my pointed toe,
You must keep watch
At noon, and catch
A ray of sun from the wild-rose patch.

You must set snares
Of gossamer hairs
To trip my dancing feet unawares,
And then, oh! then,
Like the sun, like the rain,
You must just let me go again!

Lady Margaret Sackville.

Somersault

I lo'e the stishie
O' Earth in space
Breengin' by
At a haliket pace.

A wecht o' hills
Gangs wallopin' owre,
Syne a whummlin' sea
Wi' a gallus glower.

The West whuds doon
Like the pigs at Gadara,
But the East's aye there
Like a sow at the farrow.

Hugh M'Diarmid.

The Camstairie

I keekit owre the warld's rim,
The warld's rim, the warld's rim,
I keekit owre the warld's rim,
And saw a ferlie there;
A gulf o' glamour gey grim,
Gey grim, gey grim,
A gulf o' glamour gey grim,
Fu' o' unco gear.

It was fu' o' harpers' lees,
Harpers' lees, harpers' lees,
It was fu' o' harpers' lees,
And yon were no' a wheen;
Gouden lochs and siller seas,
Trashtrie oot o' minstrelsies,
Weirdly munes and vanities
Nae man had ever seen.

Makers, noo, auld and new,
What gars ye lippen to
Siccan freits wad gie the grue
To fouk mair douce?
"Man, man, we meikle rue,
Meikle rue, meikle rue,
Man, man, we meikle rue
We canna sing crouse!

"But list noo, ye loons
Wha canna bide oor tunes,
And a' the whigmaleerie thochts
We bring the warld as boons:
Whaur ye see cloud
We see land,
Whaur ye see goud
We see sand,
Whaur ye see east
We see wast,
That ye see neist
We see past."

Lewis Spence.

Wood Magic

(NINTH CENTURY)

I WILL walk warily in the wise woods on the fringes of eventide,
For the covert is full of noises and the stir of nameless things.
I have seen in the dusk of the beeches the shapes of the lords that ride,
And down in the marish hollow I have heard the lady who sings.
And once in an April gloaming I met a maid on the sward,
All marble-white and gleaming and tender and wild of eye;—
I, Jehan the hunter, who speak am a grown man, middling hard,
But I dreamt a month of the maid, and wept I knew not why.

Down by the edge of the firs, in a coppice of heath and vine,
Is an old moss-grown altar, shaded by briar and bloom,
Denys, the priest, hath told me 'twas the lord Apollo's shrine
In the days ere Christ came down from God to the Virgin's womb.
I never go past but I doff my cap and avert my eyes—
(Were Denys to catch me I trow I'd do penance for half a year.)—

For once I saw a flame there and the smoke of a sacrifice,
And a voice spake out of the thicket that froze my soul with fear.

Wherefore to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
Mary the Blessed Mother, and the kindly Saints as well,
I will give glory and praise, and them I cherish the most,
For they have the keys of Heaven, and save the soul from Hell.
But likewise I will spare for the lord Apollo a grace,
And a bow for the lady Venus—as a friend but not as a thrall.
'Tis true they are out of Heaven, but some day they may win the place;
For gods are kittle cattle, and a wise man honours them all.

John Buchan.

Sea Moon

The broad white arrow of foam advances
Over the black Arabian Sea,
Splitting the moon-path, and moon-glint dances
On floors of fathomless ebony.

This is the old dance, old as toil,
That the moon and the deep sea made for ships,
To tear the rooted tree from soil
And man's heart from his true-love's lips.

Helen was lovely for ten red years,
And the sorrowful beauty of Deirdre died,
But the young moon horned the oldest spheres
And the full moon wantons with every tide.

Her wet feet hasten nakedly
Their silver path to the blind sky-line,
And a warm wind out of India
Washes my heart with sleep and wine.

E. R. R. Linklater.

Crowdieknowe

Oh, to be at Crowdieknowe
When the last trumpet blaws,
An' see the deid come loupin' owre
The auld grey wa's.

Muckle men wi' tousled beards
I grat at as a bairn
'll scramble frae the croodit clay
Wi' feck o' swearin',

An' glower at God an' a' His gang
O' angels i' the lift
—Thae trashy bleezin' French-like folk
Wha gar'd them shift!

Fain the weemun-folk 'll seek
To mak' them haud their row
—Fegs, God's no blate gin he stirs up
The men o' Crowdieknowe!

Hugh M'Diarmid.

Beyond Cathay

Amidst the restless seas that gird the splendid East,
That fret their hissing challenge to whirling winds,
Or sway and sing in ecstasy 'neath summer skies,
An island empire bathed in dreamlike beauty lies.
Its joyous youth play games more picturesque than ours,
Its men and women toil and glory in their strength,
Its agèd ones 'neath temple chimes await their passing bell
(For headlong Youth and virile Prime and gentle-spoken Age
Are universal things): the fruitful earth
Gives forth her gift of grain; its brimming rivers
Are bright with silv'ry gleaming Life; its sounding woods
Exude the scent of sandalwood and cinnamon,
And birds call there, answering their own strange cries.
The sun starts westwards from its hills and vales,
And gilds with fairy light the gaudy temple tower,
It fires the palace windows, lights the gay bazaar.

Madge S. Banks.

The Hills of Ruel

"Over the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day
When heather-drowsy I lay and listened
And watched where the stealthy sea-tide glistened.

Beside me there on the Hills of Ruel
An old man stooped and gathered fuel—
And I asked him this: if his son were dead,
As the folk in Glendaruel all said,
How could he still believe that never
Duncan had crossed the shadowy river?

Forth from his breast the old man drew
A lute that once on a rowan-tree grew:
And, speaking no words, began to play
"Over the hills and far away."

"But how do you know," I said, thereafter,
"That Duncan has heard the fairy laughter?
How do you know he has followed the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel?"
"How do I know?" the old man said,
"Sure I know well my boy's not dead:
For late on the morrow they hid him, there
Where the black earth moistens his yellow hair,
I saw him alow on the moor close by,
I watched him low on the hillside lie,
An' I heard him laughin' wild up there,
An' talk, talk, talkin' beneath his hair—
For down o'er his face his long hair lay
But I saw it was cold and ashy grey,
Ay, laughin' and talkin' wild he was,
An' that to a Shadow out on the grass,
A Shadow that made my blood go chill,
For never its like have I seen on the hill,
An' the moon came up, and the stars grew white,
An' the hills grew black in the bloom o' the night,
An' I watched till the death star sank in the moon

And the moonmaid fled with her flittermice shoon,
Then the Shadow that lay on the moorside there
Rose up and shook its wildmoss hair,
And Duncan he laughed no more, but grey
As the rainy dust of a rainy day,
Went over the hills and far away."

"Over the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day.
O that I too might hear the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel.

Fiona Macleod.

Mole Ruit Suâ

Peevish and dissatisfied,
A raindrop fell out of the sky
Into the Thames, and, puffed with pride,
Cried: "Lo! a mighty stream am I!"

Now, with the Thames he swam along
Until into the ocean she
Disgorged. The raindrop shrieked with joy:
"O, witness this—I am the Sea!"

But Aphrodite sought the court
Of Phœbus. Phœbus winked his eye,
And once again the boastful drop
Hung captive in a cloudy sky!

Alexander Mackenzie Davidson.

Horses

Those lumbering horses in the steady plough,
On the bare field—I wonder why, just now,
They seemed so terrible, so wild and strange,
Like magic power on the stony grange.

Perhaps some childish hour has come again,
When I watched fearful, through the blackening rain,
Their hooves like pistons in an ancient mill
Move up and down, yet seem as standing still.

Their conquering hooves which trod the stubble down
Were ritual which turned the field to brown,
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold,
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh, the rapture when, one furrow done,
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun!
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes;
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes.

But when at dusk with steaming nostrils home
They came, they seemed gigantic in the gloam,
And warm and glowing with mysterious fire,
Which lit their smouldering bodies in the mire.

Their eyes as brilliant and as wide as night
Gleamed with a cruel apocalyptic sight,
Their manes the leaping ire of the wind
Lifted with rage invisible and blind.

Ah, now it fades! it fades! and I must pine
Again for that dread country crystalline,
Where the blank field and the still-standing tree
Were bright and fearful presences to me.

Edwin Muir.

A Blade of Grass

Horses I saw, and on the horses gods,
Cumbering desolation as they massed
In battle on the plains around this vast
Toil of the Titan Masons, in whose hods
Swirled the red energy of lightning-rods
As they this cloud-compelling trophy cast;
Till conquered chaos withered in the blast
Of Heaven's loud bugles blown at diremost odds.

Here is the heart of hazard where the fate
Of cosmic things hangs dubious to Time's end.
Nor shall the traces of the sword endure,
Nor all man's wit the matter arbitrate.
The awful powers are armed and naught's secure!
Within this blade the hostile stars contend.

Frederick Victor Branford.

The Hollow Bone

Beating a hollow bone
Across his scraggy knee,
A toothless Ancient sits
Under a dark pine-tree.

Above him bright clouds move,
And past him people flee,
Yet graven to the earth
He sits, and beats his knee.

He lifts the fleshless bone
And beats a hollow knee,
While endless ages come
And flicker past the tree.

William Jeffrey.

Silver Shoes

Bellman, bellman, ring your bell,
And tell the town the news!
My lady will not go to church
Till she has silver shoes.
Leather shoes for common folk,
But silver for my lady;
Ring your bell, good bellman, ring,
From Christmas-tide to May-day!

Fringes, frills, and furbelows,
And feathers for her hair;
But still my lady wept and wept
For silver shoes to wear.
From May-day right to Christmas-tide,
Oh, ring the town the news—
My lady's sold her wedding-ring
To buy her silver shoes!

Jessie Annie Anderson.

The Dancing Star

Mr. Douglas Ainslie tells me that at the age of ten he had a dancing-master of the sort described in the poem. The old man has taken half a century to turn into a star. The poem is quite recent, but he really lived in the town of Turriff, Aberdeenshire, and used to walk up to the castle twice a week to give his lesson to the young laird.

Once there was an old dancing-master,
Once upon a time,
He was a dancing disaster,
Was this old dancing-master,
Once upon a time.
Once in the life of this old fiddle scraper—
For he fiddled as he danced,
Cutting many an ungainly caper—
He was entranced
By the dancing of a couple,
Who were really stars,
Venus the lady, luminous and supple,
And the man was Mars.
They did not look as if, but were it,
Those dancers divine,
Just as Their Graces are without the coronet,
When they go forth to dine.
So they danced, and the old fellow's fiddle
Sang as it never sang before,
But why this happened was to him a riddle
And also why both feet kept off the floor.
"We have eloped to earth," laughed Venus as she told him
Earth was heaven's Gretna Green,

"And if you doubt, look skyward and behold him"—
He looked, but Mars was nowhere to be seen.
Only a comely warrior stood beside him;
Then the old man's eyes came full of stars.
"Shall we take him back with us and hide him
Somewhere between 'Venus' and 'Mars'?
He will carry word of love between us,
We need a dancing star, we do indeed.
His long grey locks will stream with gold," said Venus,
"When Mercury has given the touch of speed."
She laid one finger where his heart was beating,
One finger divine:
Anguish of radiant bliss beyond repeating,
Then he began to shine.
Soon they were far from earth and high in heaven,
Those Lovers serene,
And on a Tuesday or a Friday even
You may see the star that dances in between.
Once there was an old dancing-master,
Once upon a time,
Yes, once there was an old dancing-master,
Once upon a time,
He was a dancing disaster,
Was this old dancing-master,
But now he is sublime.

Douglas Ainslie.

Twin Rows of Poplars

Twin rows of poplars, tall and straight and black,
Guarding like sentinels a moonlit road
Gleaming all silvery-white betwixt their dusk;
Darkly the trees stand—waiting silently

Save where a small leaf moves and whispers soft,
Then falls again to hushed expectancy. . . .
Now from without the shadow voices sound,—
Soft laughter, kisses,—and into the light,
As one, two figures move; a man, a maid.
Her face, upturned to his, gleams sweet and white;
His head downbent, with eyes adoring her;
Enchanted lovers in enchanted world,
Slowly they move adown the moonlit way,
Slowly they move till shadows gather them.
A little wind goes sighing through the trees,
Stirring the leaves to murmurous whisperings;
Then falls again, leaving the trees adream—
Dreaming of lovers who are yet unborn . . .
Of happy lovers who are long gone dust.

Maimie A. Richardson.

St. Andrews Bay at Night

Ah, listen through the music, from the shore,
The "melancholy long-withdrawing roar";
Beneath the Minster, and the windy caves,
The wide North Ocean marshalling his waves!
Even so forlorn—in worlds beyond our ken—
May sigh the seas that are not heard of men;
Even so forlorn, prophetic of man's fate,
Sounded the cold sea-wave disconsolate,
When none but God might hear the boding tone,
As God shall hear the long lament alone,
When all is done, when all the tale is told,
And the grey sea-wave echoes as of old.

Andrew Lang.

Rake the Fire

Rake the fire, the night is waning,
Angels round the hearth are watching,
Scowls the tempest, and the raining
Lashes at the heather thatching.

Now may spirits pass'd before us
Guard us, Father, in our sleeping;
Son of Mary bending o'er us,
Hold us in Thy sacred keeping.

Shield from bane and stranger's thieving
All our store 'neath rope and wattle,
And when crones their spells are weaving
Ward their evil from the cattle.

Voices o'er the moor are crying,
Flare the dead-light's fitful flashes,
God of Mercy, save the dying
While we rake the glowing ashes!

Murdoch Maclean.

Bride or Handmaiden?

Beauty ever was designed
To thrill the heart and not the mind,
To speak to the immediate blood,
But never to the pensive mood.

And when I hear one say that thought
Has been to him by Beauty brought
I know that Beauty in his house
Has dwelt as servant, not as spouse.

Lewis Spence.

A Moonlit Night on Guard

(*Aldershot: Before "Visiting Rounds"*)[1]

The moon's white generosity
Is maddening the night and me,
And what if it has maddened Time
And put this hour in some old rhyme?—
And if, instead of stock abuse,
The Visitor who comes should use
A woman's voice, a lover's tone,
And say: "*Turn out—Endymion*"?

Hugh P. F. McIntosh.

[1] "Visiting Rounds"—the officer who goes round inspecting the guards of a garrison by night.

THE SOUL OF MAN

V

THE SOUL OF MAN

This Scotland is also one of the world's lands of deep religious genius. There are those who argue that her Calvinism has been inimical to culture, but the contention is one-sided; for the austerities and restraints of life have brought abiding strength to her spirit in compensation for any narrowing and bondage. She has raged, and poked fun at herself, over all this; but, deeper still, she has full often expressed her devotion to the Lord of all good and beauteous things in tender truthfulness. Her very revolts have never been a final denial of traditional faiths—indeed they have usually been a fierce rebuke of the tacit and virtual denial of these by the misbehaviour, conventionality, and inconsistency of men who only name the Name, and would be shocked by the deeds and associations, of Jesus. Her religion has of late years wakened with an exceeding loud and bitter cry against social wrong, and in anguish over the griefs of the less fortunate fellows and the lot of fallen or lowly ones, while still delighting in the labour, independence, and honesty of Man everywhere. Faith and the Fight of Life and Faith are her themes here in satire and in song. There is nothing finer for men than to have a task great even to impossibility, and courage to tackle it and strength to overcome; or, even more

nobly, to meet defeat undaunted. The lost cause calls her sooner than the true—far sooner than the safe; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it.

The White Peace

It lies not on the sunlit hill
  Nor on the sunlit plain:
Nor ever on any running stream
  Nor on the unclouded main—

But sometimes, through the Soul of Man,
  Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
  Floods heart and brain.

Fiona Macleod.

The Unknown Swordmaker

Upon the anvil of mine heart
His merciless mysterious art
  Forged me the sword of will.
He damascened with curious wit
And in my tears he tempered it;
  'Tis mine for good or ill.
Out of blind longing was it wrought,
Obscure intensities of thought,
  And wild imaginings,—
Desperate impulses to gain
Impossible goals, and great disdain
  For baffled abject things.
Indeed I know not whence it came,

Excalibur of pride and shame
  That smites my own breast through
As often as mine enemies',
Yet hath dominion over these,
  And shall unvanquished hew,
While I draw agonising breath,
Some honourable way to death.

Rachel Annand Taylor.

Song of the Sun

From the throng'd and thick world under
I arise with step of thunder.
Through the mantle of my fire,
Through my flaming locks of hair,
Glows the form that all desire,
But more bright than they can bear;
For although I make men see,
None can dare to gaze on me.
Whether I rise in fire or blood,
Mortals hail me lord or god.
Then, before my battling knees,
Bubbling boil the surging seas,
And the clouds are writhing brent
By my fiery chastisement.
With my right hand held on high,
I let Life, the Angel, fly;
With my left, I grip and quell
Death, the Old Man, dragg'd from hell.

But ye men, who bow so low
At my gorgeous orient, know
That for ever in chains I go.

I am lord, for I am slave;
Conqueror, because I save;
Master, for I must obey;
God, because I burn away.
Though my lordly planets pace,
Peers before my sovran face,
In them every grain of sand
Governs me with like command.
So within my empery,
Only he who serves is free
And shall win the victory.

Sir Ronald Ross.

The Great Lover

Be not afraid of death,
Than you would weep in fear
If he you loved drew near,
Felt you his warm sweet breath.

Be not afraid of change
More than the baby rose
Fears on the day it blows
To find the garden strange.

Alexander Mackenzie Davidson.

Visible and Invisible

The dauntless birds, the flying winds are fled
that filled the world with sound a while ago;
Still as the doomed, and silent as the dead,
the woods have ceased to battle with the snow.

(So lie, my love,
As silent and as still,
Where Death's white flag
Of brightness dims thy face,
And calls a truce
Against thy muted will.
I shall not visit or betray thy place.)

Thrice empty world, bereft of form and feature!
as I of love, relieved of life, thy load—
Save for one hunted, red, stretched, wild wood-creature
that stirs no more in pain upon the road.

(Buried and bound
And white, be still, I say!
Tempt me no more,
O sacred trysting-place. . . .
I seem to see
Thy mouth, half-kissed-away,
Lie like a small red wound athwart thy face!—)

Mabel Christian Forbes.

To Sleep

O GENTLE Sleep, more dewy-eyed than Dawn,
More tender is thy pillowing breast than Love's,
More sweet thy mouth than all the blooms of Night—
Yet have thy misty robes scarce brushed my brow.
Oh, let thy kiss fall full upon mine eyes
That I may dream—and so forget my pain,
Forget the weariness and ache of Life.
I would forget the ache of Life, O Sleep.

Maimie A. Richardson.

The Woman and the Snail

Over the leaves, in peril and alone,
Delicately dragging your foolish house along,
You wander, and the shell that seems a stone
A thrush could crack between two jets of song.

You move as if some cold, unfruitful act
Accomplished, drew you from distasteful strife,
But beneath that shell your body, cool, compact,
Tenacious, leads its fierce and secret life.

And in that strange house that you never leave,
Where no door opens upon curious eyes,
You take your secret pleasures and receive
Dim guests, perform Eleusian mysteries.

So I too wear my fragile, social shell
As men desire and will: I deftly fit
My stature to my shelter, knowing well
How you and I together laugh at it!

Muriel Stuart.

Crying in the Night

I heard a baby
Crying in the night,
From pain or passion
Or a dream-spun fright;
It was sad hearing,
Yet the night seemed blank
When his weak wailing
Into silence sank.

But though that infant
Slept again in peace,
His wordless crying
Never more shall cease
To voice my longing,
As the days go by,
Until at evening
Sleep shall end my cry.

Annabella Milne.

During Sickness

When I am ill, and leaden-footed hours
Creep through my room like ghosts of the real day,
Steal to my door, as perfume drifts from flowers,
The voices of my children at their play.

The dragging, sleepless night will be no more,
However pain's cold fingers press my brow,
When I can hear a clear voice at my door,
"Good-morning, Mummy, are you better now?"

Oh, even in the grave, should I lie there,
Their baby need would reach me—'neath the sod,
Their silver laughter on the summer air
Would call me—call me even back from God.

Mabel V. Irvine.

Prayer to the Sacred Heart

O Heart of all Compassion, Who didst feel
For all the heavy-laden of mankind,
Who gavest sight to even the born-blind,
Thou, Who didst bless and cherish, teach and heal,
Thou, Who didst suffer for all human weal,
Who didst, and still dost, know the guileless mind
Which leaves the wise and prudent far behind,
To Thy most loving wisdom I appeal.

I, born-blind to interests of my flesh,
Who, therefore, drew into my soul the doom
Which ruins lives which only live to bless,
I, whom Thy Mother drew from world-wov'n mesh,
I, for whom now St. Joseph seeketh room,
I do beseech Thee, guide my guilelessness.

Jessie Annie Anderson.

The Fourth Shepherd

The four strange men knelt down to see
The Boy that sleeping lay,
And three were full of ecstasy,
But one said, softly: "Nay."
And he that so denied went out
Into the starry calm,
For, somewhere in the dark, he thought
He heard a bleating lamb.
With heartstrings tight with pity, he
Forgot the child within,

And Mary and his comrades three,
And counted it no sin.
Back all the weary way he trod,
And paused not once for sleep;
"*That child may be the Son of God,*
But I must guard my sheep!"

Alexander Mackenzie Davidson.

Carol

Winter winds have chilled us quite—
With a hey! for the goose, and the holly berry red:
Out in the snow-white, starlit night,
Sorry waifs are we that have long an-hungerèd,
Yet can still sing loud and true,
With "Good even, Sirs, to you,"
All for a small Stranger's sake that no cradle knew.

Winter winds have chilled our bones—
With a hey! for the goose, and the bowl that bringeth cheer,
Sweet sirs, our feet are cold as stones,
Sorry waifs are we, yet can still sing loud and clear,
Yet can still sing loud and true,
With "Good even, Sirs, to you,"
All for a small Stranger's sake that no cradle knew.

Hamish Maclaren.

The Carpenter

O one lies dead at Nazareth;
Call ye the weepers in
To sound about our house of Death
A seemly, mournful din.

For fair she was as lily-flowers
That die before the noon,
Whiter this little maid of ours
Than arrows of the moon.

A coffin from the carpenter,
A lily for her breast
And nought beside we bring to her
Silently round her rest.

She would not hear us if we told
How the youth Jesus sighed
Planing the cypress bier to hold
Her beauty that has died.

W. H. Hamilton.

Immanuel

Twenty villagers hounded from bed
By the imminent, pitiful need for bread;
Twenty pairs of sullen eyes,
Twenty necks in a yoke of skies;
Driving rain is black as sorrow,
Driving sands are white that borrow
Empery when the rain is fled.

Wives and children deep in rooms
Dank and fetid and narrow as tombs;
Curtaining dimity, closely drawn,
Makes dusky noon and a dark dawn;
And, blotting the window in blood-red blots,
Muster geraniums in pots,
To feed the murk of a hundred dooms.

The Son of man went down the street
(Wind a-wail and the rain a-beat),
The Son of man with the eyes of God,
And the weariest feet that ever trod
The weariest road; but nobody looked
And nobody saw the sunlight stooked
As yellow as corn about His feet.

Orgill Cogie.

Gain and Loss

Save the elect, all were foredoomed to hell,
They taught me, blighting all my youthtime's bloom.
Often I leapt from sleep as at the boom
Of some deep-tolling, judgment-sounding bell.
And horror's wizardry would cast its spell
Upon me, summoning up the hosts of woe,
Who, livid-faced, with dreadful eyes, must go
To torment fore-ordained ere Adam fell.

Strong winds of science have blown in shreds to the void
The miasm creed that once empoisoned sleep—
And now Night's benison is unalloyed? . . .
Nay, I have lost a dream I fain would keep,
Of One who fed starved men with Living Bread
And, weary, had not where to lay His head.

Peter Taylor.

A Cock Crowing in a Poulterer's Shop

He will not see the East catch fire again,
Nor watch the darkening of the drowsy West,
Nor sniff the morning air with joyous zest,
Nor lead his wives along the grassy lane.

Cooped in a crate, he claps his wings in vain,
  Then hangs his crimson head upon his breast;
  To-morrow's sun will see him plucked and dressed,
One of a ghastly row of feathered slain.

O chanticleer, I cannot bear it more;
  That crow of anguish, pitiful and stark,
  Makes my flesh quail at thy unhappy lot—
The selfsame cry with which thine ancestor
  Emptied his soul into the tragic dark
  The night that Peter said, "I know Him not."

John Ferguson.

Ode to Sorrow

Immortal Sorrow, that with the spirit of God
Didst journey on the dark original seas,
On peaks of ancient night thy foot was shod
To walk the scope of all immensities
Obscurely embryoned in the waters' womb.
Yea! in that hollow No-Time thou didst share
Breath with Being; a solitary tomb
Mounds over ruined worlds;—and thou art there.

What desperate hand would draw the ætherial veil
That robes thy searchless secret? What dread lips
Might mould a world-consuming oracle
If man could dare that dark apocalypse?
Dim premonitions of impending doom,
Like bodiless eagles on the verge of thought,
Float through the senses, vanishing in gloom,
Ghosts of all things that are, and yet are not.

Lo! from the topless pinnacle of mind
Bold Nature brags a high unmortal merit;
But little ruth in thee shall Nature find
Whose sight is ever nailed on changeless spirit.
Thou art a law, pale adamantine Queen,
Whose mandate runs through all the shires, and saith
To dust and deity, cosmic and terrene,
"Seek manumission in the Courts of Death."

Though bloody sweat stand beaded on the brow
Of æons labouring on fire-sown soil,
Still, on unchallenged Golgotha, art Thou
Serenely towered above the tides of toil.
From void to void Time flings the enormous forms,
Systems of wheeling suns, till space doth swell,
But thou art throned beyond the solar storms,
Cloudless and calm and inaccessible.

Unearthly mountains from an ice-gulfed base
Rear around thy shrine their glittering domes,
Thy bare and barren beauty to implace.
Alone the death-devoted prophet comes,
Strange to all loves, an exile, yet elate,
Daring those perilous domes from fear to fear,
With wild transtellar hope, or starry hate,
To drink an unseen presence, or to hear
An awful silence talking in his ear.

Frederick Victor Branford.

Man

Man putteth the world to scale
And weigheth out the stars;
Th' eternal hath lost her veil,
The infinite her bars;
His balance he hath hung in heaven
And set the sun therein.

He measures the lords of light
And fiery orbs that spin;
No riddle of darkest night
He dares not look within;
Athwart the roaring wrack of stars
He plumbs the chasm of heaven.

The wings of the wind are his,
To him the world is given;
His servant the lightning is,
And slave the ocean, even;
He scans the mountains yet unclimb'd
And sounds the solid sea.

With fingers of thought he holds
What is or e'er can be;
And, touching it not, unfolds
The sealèd mystery.
The pigmy hands, eyes, head God gave
A giant's are become.

But tho' to this height sublime
By labour he hath clomb,
One summit he hath to climb,
One deep the more to plumb—
To rede himself and rule himself,
And so to reach the sum.

Sir Ronald Ross.

A Broken-down Actor

I saw him drifting down a street of shows,
Lonely and friendless, at a country Fair—
A gaunt and withered man of listless air
Whose pock-marked face was seared by furtive woes—
Out of his old stage boots his shrinking toes
Peeped unprotected; motley was his wear;
Defeat was in his eye and long despair,
And gin-and-water written on his nose.

Through the whole range of drama he had played
These forty years since first he "rubbed the wing";
Now, wrecked in body and in mind decayed,
He who had often supped with Denmark's king,
Sued Life but for chance drinks till Death should bring
The parish coffin, grudgingly purveyed.

John Ferguson.

The Sandwichmen

The flaming boards go down the street,
  Like leaves blown in the breeze,
But underneath are shabby feet,
  Feet wearied, ill at ease.

And these are dressed by our rich men
  To wander up and down,
And children love the sandwichmen
  When they arrive in town;

Pictures, theatres, boots, and shoes,
  And stockings cheap to sell,
And men who can't afford to choose
  Must just afford to tell.

The boards light up the dingy street,
  And children love them so,
But underneath are old men's feet
  That tremble as they go.

John Macnair Reid.

The Circus Clown

With whitened scalp and nose bedaubed with red,
  He bounds into the ring and cracks his wheeze;
  Bursting with wit, he mounts a high trapeze,
Then falls into the net dispirited:
He mimics feats pyramidal, and dread
  Contortions of some "Modern Hercules,"
  While at his shins they throw a wooden cheese,
Or a soft turnip hits him on the head.

When tenting days are done, and nevermore
He smells the sawdust, sees the laughing eyes,
I somehow think that on a daisied floor
He'll turn a somersault in Paradise
To give some angel-child a glad surprise
Who never saw a circus clown before.

John Ferguson.

The Ice-Cream Man

Sunny streets I come from, where
Palaces a-many
Roofed with gold and azure are
—I never had any.

But I had yellow sunshine, sky
Bluer than a ceiling,
And yellow oranges grew by
That only needed peeling.

I left pink almond groves and grey
Olive trees for England;
Geraniums and wistaria
To sell ice-cream in England;

To live here in a black stone street
As straight as sticks, and narrow,
Its only colours when you meet
Me and my ice-cream barrow.

I hardly ever see the sky;
But when is it worth seeing?
And an ice-cream man as cold as I
I'm very tired of being.

So back I'm going (where I a-dream
Go now) when I have money,
Where even the brightest of ice-cream
Barrows won't look funny.

Orgill Cogie.

The Outworker

I have gone out and locked the door;
The key I keep.
But I may not return for many an hour,
So I hide it down in my pocket deep.

The morn is dull, the sky is grey,
To-day 'twill rain,
But I must work through the long drear day,
Ere I come to the shelter of home again.

Yes, I have gone out and locked the door—
The door of a heart;
But my work must be done, though for evermore
It keep me from home and love apart.

The key I've kept, but so deep 'tis hid—
So long, I vow,
That did weariness, cold—or memory—bid,
I could not use it to enter now.

And that little home may desolate be,
Its door fall'n wide;
Or a new lock placed there, not meant for my key,
And another dweller at rest inside.

Annie M. H. Whyte.

And Yet

I have no bitter places in my life,
All but the little things have passed me by.
My heart can neither hate nor love o'ermuch,
My path is smooth, well-ordered and content,
Like a neat garden, where the flowers stand
Straight in a row, most pleasing to the eye.
No passion flowers grow there, nor any weed,
Only sweet blooms, but not too colourful.
I pity those I see who go distraught,
Beating their wings against the bars of life. . . .
. . . But sometimes when at dusk I go alone,
And see two lovers wander hand in hand,
Mute and content, with dreaming look, their eyes
Rapt, almost holy—as an angel's wings
Had brushed them passing by: or when I see
A mother smile upon her sleeping babe,
My eyes grow hot and wet—I know not why.

Maimie A. Richardson.

Life

Praise be to Allah it is ordered so—
That Life may turn a sweet averted face
Against the Past, yet hopefully embrace
The Future with her indeterminate woe
Hidden; that o'er the fronting portico
This superscription added years may trace,
Tooled by a king of the poetic race,
"The happiness of life is—*not* to know."

Never to know the end, but still to hope
That, howsoever pain may tear the heart,
Nevertheless . . . at last . . . all will be well;
And strive and toil and play the destined part
Too deep immersed to hear the downward slope
And whispering plume of potent Azrael.

Victor F. Murray.

Desire

Would she were on horseback and I with her!
Facing fleetly this wind by wood and shore,
Through sun-fleck and shadow—on, evermore;
Heart a-throbbing to this day's storm and fire!—
Beating like wind and wave, in wild desire:—
The lift, the lilt—hoof-clink, and forest roar!
Old days behind—a life set free before—
Free! as the Wind sings to her pine-wood lyre.

Oh! to be riding so with her this day!—
Could we but cross the march of Elfin land,
Where time runs not by the measure of sand:
Or, enchanted ride on some endless way;
Kissed by the winds tasting of salt sea spray—
Lovers love-lost, by unknown wold and strand.

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

The Shorter Catechism

(with proofs)

When I was young and herdit sheep,
I read auld tales o' Wallace wight;
My heid was fou o' sangs and threep
O' folk that feared nae mortal might.

But now I'm auld and weel I ken
We're made alike o' gowd and mire;
There's saft bits in the stievest men,
The bairnliest's got a spunk o' fire.
Sae hearken to me, lads,
It's truith that I tell;—
There's nae man a' courage—
I ken by mysel'.

I've been an elder forty year,
I've tried to keep the narrow way,
I've walked afore the Lord in fear,
I've never missed the kirk a day,
I've read the Bible in and oot,
I ken the feck o't clean by he'rt;—
But still and on I sair misdoot
I'm better noo than at the stert,
Sae hearken to me, lads,
It's truith I maintain!—
Man's works are but rags, for
I ken by my ain.

I hae a name for dacent trade;
I'll wager a' the countryside
Wad swear nae trustier man was made
The ford to soom, the bent to bide.
But when it comes to coupin' horse
I'm juist like a' that e'er were born,
I fling my heels and tak my course—
I'd sell the minister the morn.
Sae hearken to me, lads,
It's truith that I tell:—
There's nae man deid honest—
I ken by mysel'.

John Buchan.

Gin I was God

Gin I was God, sittin' up there abeen,
Weariet nae doot noo a' my darg was deen,
Deaved wi' the harps an' hymns oonendin' ringin',
Tired o' the flockin' angels hairse wi' singin',
To some clood-edge I'd daunder furth an', feth,
Look ower an' watch hoo things were gyaun aneth.
Syne, gin I saw hoo men I'd made mysel'
Had startit in to pooshan, sheet and fell,
To reive an' rape, an' fairly mak' a hell
O' my braw birlin' Earth—a hale week's wark—
I'd cast my coat again, rowe up my sark,
An', or they'd time to lench a second ark,
Tak' back my word an' sen' anither spate,
Droon oot the hale hypothec, dicht the sklate,
Own my mistak', an', aince I'd cleared the brod,
Start a' thing owre again, gin I was God.

Charles Murray.

The Sang o' the Smiddy

Awa' wi' yer diddles on the pipes and the fiddles,
Awa' wi' yer ballats and yer flings sae free!
Hey for the smiddy whaur the auld toun hiddles,
And the lilt o' the hammer in the North Countree!
Wi' the clink-clank-clour
And the sterny stour,
And the sang o' the airn on the steel sae slee;
Eh, lease me on yon walloch for an hour
That rants in the smiddies o' the North Countree!

The pipe is steerin' and braw tae the hearin',
And the drum is a brither o' the bluid tae me.
But the sang owre a' that my saul is speirin'
Is the ding o' the anvil in the North Countree.
Eh, the tow-row-row
O' the brawny gow
As he skelps on the stithy wi' a snae-snick-snee,
The gurr o' the bellows and the glint o' the lowe,
And the scaum o' the smiddies in the North Countree!

The chink o' the coin is sweet tae the gruppy,
And sweet tae the weary is the bird in the tree,
The drouth he craves for the clink o' the cuppie,
But gie me the anvil in the North Countree!
Oh, it's ran-dan-dan
Is the sang for a man,
Like a bell frae a schooner on a stormy sea,
Eh, ma lugs are ringin' at the thocht o' the singin'
O' the airn on the anvil in the North Countree!

Lewis Spence.

Behold! the Dreamer Cometh!

Behold! the Dreamer cometh! For His sake
Strew the long road with stones. Doth He not bring
Strange tidings of great joy? Oh! He would fling
These chains far from us. Slay Him, lest they break!
Watch closely; is not all we have at stake,
Our old familiar servitude and sin?
The Stranger's at the gate—let Him not in,
Let Him not in, lest all we dead should wake!

This grievous torment surging up afresh
Each generation! Scarcely may we keep
Our beds, so near the Dreamer comes, alas!
Beware! lest all unnoticed He slips through,
Since with no trumpet-blare He stirs our sleep,
But very meekly, seated on an ass.

Lady Margaret Sackville.

Prodigal

Into the new-stilled haven of my mind,
When it had first been fashioned and designed,
All storm-bleached and crestfallen, skulking in,
Drifted the wreckage of a sunken sin.

There many a stately ship at anchor lay
Awaiting wind to voyage o'er the bay,
Like white-pavilioned clouds that proudly ride,
Armadas in a slowly creeping tide.

And, as I dreamed how fair the wreck had been,
Sudden the goodlier craft no more were seen,
All vanished like the shy day-fearing stars:—
And I stood gaping by a hulk of spars.

David Cleghorn Thomson.

For Fasting Days

Are you, my songs, importunate of praise?
Be still, remember for your comforting
That sweeter birds have had less leave to sing
Before men piped them from their lonely ways.

Greener leaves than yours are lost in every spring,
Rubies far redder thrust their piteous rays
Into the blindfold dark for many days
Before men chose them for their finger-ring.

Sing as you dare, not as men choose, receive not
The passing fashion's prize, for dole or due—
The hour's loud foolish recognition—grieve not:
Oh, stoop not to them! Better far that you
Should go unsung than sing as you believe not,
Should go uncrowned than to yourselves untrue.

Muriel Stuart.

On the Bridge at Sea

When I have struggled with the sea,
And gained enough of mastery
Of wind and tide and heavy wave
That seek to drag me to their grave,
To bring my body safe ashore,
I swear that I will sail no more.

Among the landsman's rowdy joys,
Long in my ears I hear the noise
Of splashing wave and whistling wind,
And all the fears I left behind,
Until there grows and swells in me
A bitter hatred of the sea.

Often upon the bridge at night
Watching the lonely masthead light
Swing with the rolling of the ship,
Swing down, and down, as if to dip
Into the black, tremendous seas,
My soul cries out for steady trees.

And often when the gleam of day
Lightens the endless, heaving grey,
With never a friendly-looking house,
Nor even refuge for a mouse,
From all the desolate waste revealed
My soul cries for a still green field.

And then I think that if we fetch
England again, I'll go and stretch
My body in a place of trees,
And silent flowers and humming bees,
In a deep inland valley, far
From ship and sea, and rope and spar;

And in that sheltered valley hid,
Live simply as my fathers did
On the unshaken, solid earth;
Dwell by a quiet cottage hearth,
And not the wildest gales that blow
Shall set it pitching to and fro.

How good to lounge about and dream
Where there's no water but the stream
That turns the wheel that turns the mill,
Hidden below the friendly hill:
Or in the meadow lie and drowse
Among the heavy, munching cows!

And there the only bell would be,
Not the harsh thing that clangs at sea,
But one that from the steeple, slow
Swings out, and calls the folk below
To hear the ancient word of God,
And how in earlier fields He trod.

Or, leaning on the churchyard gate,
How good when summer nights are late,
To think that in that blessed ground
So many folk sleep safe and sound,
While through the silent years the moss
Climbs slowly up the mouldering cross.

And so at last to have my bones,
Not washed about on weedy stones,
But safely coffined, warmly laid,
Where all my folk lie, man and maid,
Until God stills His tides at length
And the sea lays aside its strength.

But it will not be so! I'm fain
To rest, but I'll be here again.
The sea that to the boy was sweet,
The sea will draw the old man's feet.
One day she'll gain me—then no more
Shall I dream of the solid shore.

George Reston Malloch.

At the Door

They ring my bell,
Do they not know
They wring my heart as well?

The old man with
His oddments on a tray,
Eyes of a hunted dog
Seeking for bones;
His voice like some
Enfeebled waterfall,

Spraying from summits
On to broken stones.

The onion boy,
Like some young Grecian god
Fall'n from high Olympus,
His cheek sun-kiss'd
Tho' now he seems
Touched with a puzzled gloom
To find himself so
Lost in our grey mist.

The tinker fierce,
Ragged and hungry, yet
Facing his lonely fate
Barefoot but bold;
The ne'er do weel,
Unchinned, with shapely hands,
His nervous lips so
Stiff with numbing cold.

The woman with
The baby in her shawl,
A quiet Madonna she,
In the dim light;
Tho' I am poor
Yet surely I must give.
Can I turn Mary,
Weary, into the night?

They ring my bell,
Do they not know
They wring my heart as well?

Wendy Wood.

Passing Crowds

Drifts, drifts, the dark crowd!
Herded impotence urged on by need
That thinks it loiters idle as it please.
Vague, dull, and purposeless,
Knowing not whence its being,
Whither it must go,
Busy with senseless motion,
Turbulent and slow
Drifts the dark crowd.

The dark crowd drifts,
Creature of laws unguessed, undreamed,
Beauty plucked red
From herding ugliness,
Power plucked from powerlessness,
Purpose most strange and awful,
Moving lack of aim.
Courage and victory that bear defeat,
A tattered banner,
Through life's stricken field,
Glory in filth and shame,
Law that knows none,
Along the sombre street,
Clamorous, forlorn,
Through lights that blaze and blaze,
The dark crowd drifts.

Janetta I. W. Murray.

The Harbour-Mouth

My bark is laden—all the freight is tears,
  Wild tears, unchidden; and the decks are mann'd
By my sad thoughts; (in irons are my fears:)
  But Hope—but Hope is in supreme command.

Up anchor, then! What holds me to the land?
  . . . Dost thou not know! More strong than
    death the chain.
Ah, draw it once!—so I may feel thy hand.
  Fear not. I shall not come . . . Ah, sweet
    the pain!

Mabel Christian Forbes.

MORTAL AND IMMORTAL

VI

MORTAL AND IMMORTAL

The first twelve years are long, long years; but not so long the next score. At forty, men wonder what they have been doing all the time; and thereafter doubt whether there will now be time for them to do anything worth while. Then age and death creep swiftly closer, and youth seems lost and wasted—and a thing to be vainly sought for, almost before it has begun. But some have meanwhile triumphed, and we salute them; and we so rejoice in the gallantry of life, despite all its griefs, that belief in a better land beyond it and a life yet braver becomes ever less incredible, although the way is veiled from our eyes. The Scot goes under with a gladsome kick and "God Save the King!"

Those Pinafore Girls

Those pinafore girls,
Round, slender, and rosy,
Blue bows in their curls,
And each with a posy
Of daisies and pansies,
Round about in a ring
They go in their dances,
And clap their hands and sing

In the mead by the stream,
And shake their wild curls
In the dream that I dream
Of shy pinafore girls.

But they and the others
Long, long since have grown
To nurse-maids and mothers
With girls of their own,
Have stayed or have flitted,
Got kindly or scolded,
Have scrubbed floors or knitted,
Or died with hands folded.

In meadows now empty
Tall beeches are massed,
And there the winds sigh
For the days that are past,
The willow-trees quiver,
But daisies in flower
Say: "They dance here for ever
Who danced for an hour."

James Guthrie.

To Olive

I

When in dim dreams I trace the tangled maze
Of the old years that held and fashioned me,
And to the sad assize of Memory
From the wan roads and misty time-trod ways,
The timid ghosts of dead forgotten days
Gather to hold their piteous colloquy,
Chiefly my soul bemoans the lack of thee
And those lost seasons empty of thy praise.

Yet surely thou wast there when life was sweet,
(We walked knee-deep in flowers) and thou wast there,
When in dismay and sorrow and unrest,
With weak bruised hands and wounded bleeding feet,
I fought with beasts and wrestled with despair
And slept (how else?) upon thine unseen breast.

II

I have been profligate of happiness
And reckless of the world's hostility,
The blessèd part has not been given to me
Gladly to suffer fools; I do confess
I have enticed and merited distress
By this, that I have never bowed the knee
Before the shrine of wise Hypocrisy,
Nor worn self-righteous anger like a dress.

Yet write you this, sweet one, when I am dead:
"Love like a lamp swayed over all his days
And all his life was like a lamp-lit chamber,
Where is no nook, no chink unvisited
By the soft affluence of golden rays,
And all the room is bathed in liquid amber."

III

Long, long ago you lived in Italy,
You were a little princess in a state
Where all things sweet and strange did congregate,
And in your eyes was hope or memory
Or wistful prophecy of things to be;
You gave a child's blank "no" to proffered fate,
Then became grave, and died immaculate,
Leaving torn hearts and broken minstrelsy.

But Love that weaves the years on Time's slow loom
Found you again, reborn, fashioned and grown
To your old likeness in these harsher lands;
And when life's day was shadowed in deep gloom
You found me wandering, heart-sick and alone,
And ran to me and gave me both your hands.

IV

My thoughts like bees explore all sweetest things
To fill for you the honeycomb of praise,
Linger in roses and white jasmine sprays,
And marigolds that stand in yellow rings.
In the clear air they moan on muted strings,
And the blue sky of my soul's summer days
Shines with your light, and through pale violet ways,
Birds bear your name in beatings of their wings.

I see you all bedecked in bows of rain,
New showers of rain against new-risen suns,
New tears against new light of shining joy.
My youth, equipped to go, turns back again,
Throws down its heavy pack of years and runs
Back to the golden house a golden boy.

V

When we were Pleasure's minions, you and I,
When we mocked grief and held disaster cheap,
And shepherded all joys like willing sheep
That love their shepherd; when a passing sigh
Was all the cloud that flecked our April sky,
I floated on an unimagined deep,
I loved you as a tired child loves sleep,
I lived and laughed and loved, and knew not why.

Now I have known the uttermost rose of love;
The years are very long, but love is longer;
I love you so, I have no time to hate
Even those wolves without. The great winds move
All their dark batteries to our fragile gate:
The world is very strong, but love is stronger.

VI

When I am dead you shall not doubt or fear,
Or wander nightly in the halls of gloom.
The moon will shine into my empty room,
And in the narrow garden flowers will peer,
While you look through your window. Scarce a tear
Will drench your child's blue eyes, while on my tomb
Where the red roses wake and break and bloom,
The stars gaze down eternal and austere.

And I, in the dark ante-room of Death,
Will wait for you with ever-outstretched hands
And ears strained for your little timid feet;
And in the listening darkness, when your breath
Pants in distress, my arms will be like bands
And all my weakness like your winding-sheet.

Lord Alfred Douglas.

The Race

When we began to run the race
The fairest sons of speed and grace
Right suddenly threw out their hands,
And smote their brows upon the sands.
They slumber where they fell that day,—
Still for the early dead I pray.

(Now seize the palm who hath the lust.
Whatever triumph-song be sung,
The sweetest eyes are filled with dust,
The swiftest feet unstrung.)

On other souls a folly came
Like fraud and violence and shame.
Then, swiftly ringing them about,
The angry Rivals cast them out,
To sit and beg the race-course by.
Alas for them that could not die!
(Go up, go up, ye fierce and proud,
Whom madness never overthrew:
But they that sit with heads down bowed
Had haughtier hearts than you.)

And some have slackened dreamily,
Gardens enclosed where lilies be
Imagining. Through dust and heat
How the pure wells of love are sweet
They knew, and softly passed aside.
They passed, and they were satisfied.
(Hark, when the racers' King is crowned,
The long huzzas! But richer far
The passional Porch-verse will sound
Beneath Love's marriage-star.)

O victors, when the garlands bind
Your beating brows—then shall you find
A mortal languor in the Cup,
The Cup of Honour lifted up?
And shall they tire the very soul,
Those silver trumpets of the Goal?

("Is this the glory?" shall you say.
"O Vanity of Vanities
For which we bled our hearts away!
Where is the perfect Peace?")

Rachel Annand Taylor.

Winter

Down by the water-meadows
All on a winter's noon,
There was a naked thorn-bush
Sang a mournful rune;
She told the reeds a story
Of memories and sighs,
Of the robber bees' carousal
And the waft of butterflies.

All in a winter's gloaming
Down by the shingly shore,
There were two ancient sailormen
Outside a tavern door,
Complaining to each other
With lamentable lips
For the great dead captains,
And the old Sailing Ships.

Marion Angus.

The Dancers

From where I sat, apart, unseen,
I saw the dancers pass below,
Like phantom figures on a screen,
Dreamily moving to and fro.

The music held me in its power
As long I watched, in that high hall,
Beauty unconscious of its hour,
And careless Youth that will have all.

And all within me rose to praise
And bless them in their revellings,
So heedless of Life's darkened ways,
So brave for Life's adventurings.

Then Envy came, with fingers cold,
And sudden in my heart there sprung
Madness and rage that I was old
And that I never had been young.

Alexander Gray.

Love and Death

Acres of bowed brown-headed wheat,
Acres of scented clover-grass
Border the riverside where meet
The sturdy lad and clinging lass,

Forgetful of the singing wind,
Forgetful of the jewelled skies,
Forgetful of the world, who find
A world within each other's eyes.

In youthful dalliance, arm in arm,
With laughter reigning in the breath,
Untracked of care, freed of alarm,
They jest and love, forgetting death.

Acres of sturdy corn stand deep,
Acres of grass embrace the rill;
And he who sowed them lies asleep
There in God's acre on the hill.

Victor F. Murray.

To Sheena, Beloved, Thought Dying

"Draw the curtains back: let the moon come in."
I hurry softly.
You do not wait to see the staring moon;
You slip into a cleft of dark silence,
And I, harsh with terror, am left
Alive, alone.
Life draw you back, and fill
Your eyes with the moon,
Your ears with hubbub of owls in the wood!
If life cannot: if death . . .
Death! and I moon-drenched,
Deaved with owls here, left
Wondering what light,
Warm light or cold there:
What sound,
Fierce sound or sweet there;
Wondering
If any light, if any sound at all.

I, inescapable, every way I turn;
You escaped
Free in a cage with the door shut on me.

Breathing: breathing:
Seconds of age added to you.

Age that was the enemy is become the friend.
Age is my desire for you,
That, when I say your name,
Long years away, it may stand
For an old woman.
I could be glad
Watching your beauty wrinkle and grow grey,
Hurrying you past days, on
Into years.

The wheeling earth,
The wheeling, cold, dead moon!
The staring moon, come seven nights,
Wheeled to a sliver of light will creep
Through curtains to your bed,
The moon on your face again?
The moon seeking through the unwindowed waste,
Blinded by clay?
I moon-drenched,
Deaved with owls: here.

Orgill Cogie.

From "The Desire to Depart"

(I KINGS XI. 21, 22)

And thus our hearts appeal to them
When we behold our dearest rise
And look towards Jerusalem
With strangely kindling eyes.

And thus we vainly seek to hide
With the poor curtain of our love
The shining Gates that open wide
To welcome our sweet Saints above.

Yet still to them, from that bright Land,
Through our thin tent the Glory gleams;
Already lost to us they stand
Wrapped in a mist of golden dreams:

For ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on Earth again.

And they who see Him risen afar
At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand of home and land,
Desiring fair Jerusalem.

Barbara Millar.

The Rowan

When the days were still as deith
And ye couldna see the kye
Though ye'd maybe hear their breith
I' the mist oot-by;
When I'd mind the lang grey een
O' the warlock by the hill
And sit fleggit like a wean
Gin a whaup cried shrill;
Tho' the he'rt wad dee in me
At a fitstep on the floor,
There was aye the rowan tree
Wi' its airm across the door.

But that is far, far past
And a' thing's just the same,

There's whisper up the blast
O' a dreid I daurna name;
And the shilpit sun is thin,
Like auld man deein' slow,
And a shade comes creepin' in
When the fire is fa'in' low;
Then I feel thae lang een set
Like a doom upon ma heid,
For the warlock's livin' yet—
But the rowan's deid!

Violet Jacob.

Prologue of Lament by Players

April has come to the Isles again blythe as a lover,
Shaking out bird-song and sunshine, and soothing the tides:
April has come to the Hebrides, filled them with frolic,
Only in Lewis of sorrow, bleak winter abides.
Always they went to the battles, the people of Lewis,
And always they fell, in the wars of a thousand years;
Peace never to Lewis brought Springtime of joy or of season,
The wars might be won, but her women were fated to tears!

That is, to-day, why in Lewis the lark sings unheeded,
The sparkle of waves in the sea-creeks gladdens no eye;
No dance to the pipe in the croft, and no mirth in the sheiling,
Waebegone, weary, the hours of the Spring go by.
They had lit up their windows for beacons, the women of Lewis,

The peat-fires were glowing a welcome, the table
was spread;
The sea brought their sons back from war, and the
long years of tumult,
And cast them ashore, on the cliffs of their boyhood,
dead!

We are but players in motley, brief moths of a season,
Mimicking passion and laughter, and loving and
grief;
But yet are we kin to all souls that are sad and enduring,
Acquainted with sorrow ourselves, we would bring
them relief.
Far, far is the cry to the Lews and its storm-bitten
beaches,
To the Isle of lamenting, that lies on the sea like a
gem;
If aught be of feeling profound in this place of our
playing,
'Tis because we remember the women, our thoughts
are with them!

Neil Munro.

From a Sanatorium

O Thou to Whom our glorious fanes we rear,
Unto Whose praise pontifical psalms are sung,
And prayers of perfume rise from censers swung,
And in Whose Presence angels tremble and fear:—
I, strangely daring, crave Thy compassionate ear,
Thy pity on these hearts by suffering wrung,
So old in Sorrow they, and yet so young,
My hopeless brothers lying prostrate here.

Not unto me, O Lord, but unto them
Thy tender mercy and compassion show,
Their destined road of dole and death who fare—
Whose tremulous hands are stretched forth to the air,
If haply they may touch Thy garment's hem,
If from Thy Being virtue still may flow.

John Ferguson.

Cortège

Poor Jeanie left her house at morn,
And Rob stood silent by the door
As she came out, all decked with flowers
To hide the ancient dress she wore.

With her six sons she slowly took
Across the hillside, through the peat—
Oh, wheresoe'er they went, went she;
But Jeanie never wet her feet.

Alexander Mackenzie Davidson.

Sleepy Hillock

I

On Sleepy Hillock,
By the auld yew tree,
Wi' monie anither, he lies
That was kind to me.

II

There's a lilac sweet,
And a white rose bush,
By the water-worn stane whar he sleeps
To the burn's laigh hush.

III

What needs there be mair
For them lie here
Till Sleepy Hillock wake
In the day o' fear?

IV

But—O Sleepy Hillock!
Wi' your whisperin' burn;
Hae ye nae word for me,
Frae him I mourn?

Pittendrigh Macgillivray.

Two Epitaphs

I

This quiet pillow
Share with me,
Till Time also
Has ceased to be;

Time, whose rough hand
Has harshly spread
Our little poor and
Narrow bed

To serve his stern
And tedious whim;
We who, in turn,
Shall bury him!

II

His life was like white steel. A mind
Keen as a blade, but ever kind.
Like an eager wind he blew
Through the world. He loved a few;
Hated none. Beneath his wings
Crowds of little, helpless things
Found shelter. These shall surely keep
Trusty watch about his sleep.

Lady Margaret Sackville.

To the Master of Harmonies

I, John the priest, shall die one day; and since
In Christ's Kirk I am held a petty prince
That must be mourned, and may not be let bide
Dust that would fain have been scattered on the tide,
I charge you solemnise my obsequies
Without one maudlin whisper from the keys
Of yon proud organ. Peal God's triumph there
And pour high praise exultant on the air:
Ring out a blast contemptuous of Death
And bid the choir shout *Gloria* with all their breath.
Let no fool snivel round my kisted corse
Or mutter pious nonsense to endorse
The truth my silent slumbering shall preach best
To those who care. (Be such, if such be, blessed!)

Men make too much of mere mortality.
I'd have them set gay banners floating free
Who seek expression o'er the dust of me,
And for themselves, and for God's Cause, go pray,
But know 'tis John's long Coronation day.

Set me vast music swelling—not that I
Would be once thought on while it floods the sky,
But that it speaks the dreams I have adored—
Defiant, majestic, rapturous in Our Lord
Beneath Whose feet Death's broken forces roll
And in Whose hand, unshatterable and whole,
Shall dwell whate'er of God bode in my soul.
And for the rest—what matter? O'er such dung
I'd have folks hold their breath, and no song sung—
There's worthier work for music and man's tongue.

Laud ye the God of Life! . . . Yet in your heart
If tenderness intrude and claim a part,
Steal to the organ you and I have loved
Ere folks come nigh, and by affection moved
Play me that manlike tone of courage born
And heavenly dear to me, albeit forlorn
For lost sweet places and romantic days—
"*By yon bonnie banks and by yon bonny braes.*"
And since more poignant beauty he has wrung
Out of its loveliness than can be sung,
Render it as Cyril Scott has set it down,
A strain for Beauty's praise, fair Music's crown.

But when the folk draw near—no puling phrase,
No tears of melody, no sweet amaze
Of lullaby, nor luscious candy-stuff;
But chant heroic—valiant, even gruff.
Make their mouths cry, "*The Son of God goes forth*
To War! Who follows in His train?" . . . 'Twere worth
Dying, to have men sing that from their soul.
No hero I—but that's the bell I'd toll
Until in awful joy, by God's fire shriven,
They break with eyes ashine up the ascent of heaven.

Then, while they scale their vision, draw all your stops
And blare those chords that await them at heav'n's tops
The HALLELUJAH CHORUS: "*The Lord God Omnipotent*
Reigneth, and He shall reign for ever and ever."
Spent
With ecstasy beneath the opening skies
Speeding them onward, pause; and if your eyes
Too hazardous are with light the earth to see
Trumpet once more that Third Mode Melody
Of Thomas Tallis, and remember me
Only to murmur once, "John was frail clay,
But he chose well the music of this day."

W. H. Hamilton.

SEA LAUGHTER

THE waves are laughing and the winds are sighing
With the falling tide:
There's a wild goat bleating and a woman crying
On the far hillside.

There are children praying, while the waves are mocking,
Round their mother's knee:
There's a father cradled where the wrack is rocking
On an angry sea.

There's a gull awheeling where the haze is lifting
In a cold, grey cloud:
There's a numb corpse hidden, where the waves are drifting,
In a sea-wrack shroud.

Alasdair Alpin MacGregor.

Angus Remembers

The years are crowding on me
With press and reach of hands,
With sudden rasp of footsteps
And shout of age that brands,
And 'midst them in my dreaming
No April-tide I see
Blazing the Earth with red buds
And eyes of greenery.

'Tis fog of dreich November
That clips my day's breath now;
The suns of youth have vanished,
And winter's near my brow.
Yet would I, in this season,
Ere brain and heart be null,
Leave work and board and lodging
And walk by Lorne and Mull.

For there, at sup of evening,
When prime stars pour the wine
Of darkness from their bright spouts
I've seen the crushed sea shine
With love-light round the beaches
And skerries of the isles,
And lone birds planing homeward
From salt Atlantic miles.

And there in old inn parlours
I've heard the glasses clink
And tongues hoist sail with friendship,
Afloat on golden drink;

And if I go there, hobbling,
Some lass—who knows, who knows?
Shall look with kindness on me
And seed my heart with rose!

William Jeffrey.

After

After the dust and turmoil of the day,
The quiet embrace and wifely welcoming—
Glad little folk that cluster in a ring,
The truest marriage-ring, the sages say!
After hard wanderings on a tortured way,
The lights of home and music's beckoning!
After the frozen snow-dust's whip and sting,
The impulse and the burgeoning of May!

After the glare and clangor of the town,
Great waves of prairie heaving like a breath
And silent constellations gazing down!
After the soundless North, a human hand!
After the infinite Ocean, sight of land!
And after life, praise God! new life in death.

Victor F. Murray.

Elegy

One summer noon in boyhood long ago
I stood alone about the village ways,
Watching the river's silent vastness glow
Beneath me with a child's long wondering gaze.

Roses of red and pink the gardens decked,
And scarlet campions drowsily lit the peace;
Bees hummed among the fuchsia-bushes flecked
With golden pollen from the basking leas.

Quiet was all: you never knew such calm
As filled the air with slumber and repose.
No step or word stirred there; a dreamy balm
Of melancholy heat-struck flowers uprose.

And hour by hour passed by, stagnant and sweet;
Scarce was I 'ware of breathing or of thought;
The whole still village shone across the heat;
No sign of human life the warm light caught

Till a black hearse stole like a phantom down
And stood while the horses quaffed the tinkling spring
And four stern men bore out a coffin strown
With white blooms for old Elspeth's burying.

Hardly a sound fell; a wheel slightly creaked
As the procession grimly moved away—
Away, away like a shadow with sunlight streaked—
And I too followed in lazy childish play,

To watch old Elspeth to the kirkyard rolled
And hear the rich words through the privet hedge,
"*The silver cord is loosed, the bowl of gold*
Is broken," spoken from the steep grave's edge.

Sorrowing I stole near, and marked across
The parched clay's whiteness a beetle's fleet career—
'Twas blacker than Elspeth's coffin, and with moss
And earth fell in the yawning sepulchre.

And strangely, idly, mournfully then I mused
Whether the living insect could escape
Through the relentless earth-heap that refused
Outlet to Elspeth laid in wood and crape,

As homeward through the torrid air I roamed
Where the red-blossoming hamlet-gardens drowse
O'er those great, resting waters that ne'er foamed
And each small, seemly-silent, red-roofed house.

W. H. Hamilton.

Good-bye

It should have been good-bye before the Spring
Sent its first call unto the mating birds,
And rushed the sap through budding burgeoning woods,
And made the whole sweet world a little mad—
Before the dusky nights grew warm and soft
And fair desire laughed low beneath the stars.
Oh Heart of Mine! it should have been good-bye
Before the Spring had come to wake the world.

Maimie A. Richardson.

Revenant

"It is cold in the room, lamp's out, the moon is late,
Something cried out just now as in great fear! . . .
Ghost that I knew, what brings you suddenly near?"
"*You said you would come to me if I would wait. . . .*"
"But you died long ago, poor foolish dear!

"And dead and living cannot mix or meet,
You to the dark, and I to love must go."
"*Last night but not to-night?*" "What can you do
To hinder me from one who is as sweet
As you were once? You're dead. . . ." "*But you're dead too.*"

Muriel Stuart.

The Tryst

O the way sometimes is low,
And the waters dark and deep,
And I stumble as I go.

But I have a tryst to keep.
It was plighted long ago
With some who lie asleep.

And though hours go dragging slow,
And the sad hours graveward creep,
And the world is hush'd with woe,

I neither wail nor weep,
For they would not have it so,
And I have a tryst to keep.

Lauchlan MacLean Watt.

Flanders

Two broken trees possess the plain,
Two broken trees remain.
Miracles in steel and stone
That might astound the sun are gone.
Two broken trees remain.

Frederick Victor Branford.

Yielding Place

They are building a new bridge over the river,
And the sweet air all day
Is full of the noise of riveting hammers,
And cranes jangle and bray.

All day the old men from the village
Stand agape, with listless eyes,
On the bridge which has lasted their time,
Watching the framework rise.

David Cleghorn Thomson.

Flight

The sheep-track knows the wanderers no more.
They left the dull hard road at break of dawn:
They fled the formal intercourse of yore
To count red daisies on a sunlit lawn.

But neither sun nor daisies, whin nor bell,
Nor scent of sea or heather lures them now.
No copses dim hold them with subtle spell:
To some austerer voice of fate they bow.

Outside the glade the corn is cut and gone;
Outside the garden-gate the flow'rs are furl'd;
Outside the dream the dreamers stand alone—
Apart—and gaze upon an empty world.

Mabel Christian Forbes.

The Minstrel

In dreams I see her yet
  Shine on the night,
Undimmed by age or fret
  That forehead white;

Still in her tender lips
  Red roses keep;
Still move her finger-tips
  Softer than sleep—

Slow hands to harm or break,
  Swift hands to heal,
Warm hands for mine to take,
  Kind hands to steal

Gently about my brow
  Smoothing my hair,
Locks that are aged now
  Withered with care.

. . .

Long ago—could it be,
  Or yesternight
That my love came to me
  Shining and white?

Nay, it was long ago,
  Not yesternight.

Robert L. Mackie.

There's Nane o' My Ain to Care

There's nane o' my ain to care,
  There's nane to mind me now,
There's nane o' my ain to comb my hair,
  There's nane to sponge my mou'.

There's nane o' my ain to care,
  Strange han's sall straighten me,
Strangers sall fauld about my limbs
  The claes o' my deid body.

William Ogilvie.

The Hint o' Hairst

It's dowie, dowie, at the hint o' hairst,
  At the wyegaun o' the swallow,
    When the wind blaws cauld,
    And the burn rins bauld,
  And the wuds are hingin' yellow;
But oh, it's dowier far to see
The wyegaun o' ane that the hert gangs wi',
An' the dead glint in the glancin' e'e
That looked on the warld sae cheerily.

Hew Ainslie (1792–1878).

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

Page 5.

Sleep Weel: *wean*, child; *dancers*, aurora borealis, portent; *bour-tree*, elder; *shaw*, wood.

Page 6.

The Northern Lichts: *fleg*, frighten; *a-lowe*, aflame, aglow; *the streen*, yestereven; *Rax*, reach, stretch.

Page 9.

Observances: *sark*, shirt; *teem*, empty; *tassie*, cup.

Page 12

From "A Lan'wart Loon": *scrogs*, bushes; *linn*, waterfall; *ettle*, intend; *in unco fettle*, uncommonly fit; *joukin'*, winding; *scarrow*, pale light; *ferlies*, wonders; *gliff*, glance; *wurly scrabble*, stunted furze; *habble*, mess; *heeze*, hoist; *antrin*, odd; *beekin'*, basking; *fail-dyke*, turf-wall; *devald*, ceased; *lint his houchs*, sit down for a little; *fley*, fright; *scree*, gathered stones; *hainglt*, go about feebly; *dweebly*, faintingly; *lown*, hollow; *snoovin'*, gliding; *stell'd*, fixed; *glow'rt*, stared; *hoven cuits*, swollen ankles; *stechy*, stiff; *loon*, lad; *flytin'*, scolding; *santit*, vanished; *forfoucken*, tired out; *gyte*, mad; *gowpin'*, throbbing; *lan'wart*, landward.

Page 14.

Salute to the Mantuan: *loof*, palm of hand; *wame*, belly, or seat of emotions; *ilk*, each.

Page 17.

Almæ Matres: *Dim-mirrored in the wet sea-sand.* This phenomenon has been questioned but may be seen any day at ebb-tide from Kinkell Braes on the Fife coast.

PAGE 22.

TAM I' THE KIRK: *ding*, hammering sound; *the Word*, Holy Scripture; *paraphrases*, passages of Scripture done into metre for singing by congregations; *keek*, peep, dawn.

PAGE 24.

JOHN: *lan'ersome*, tardy; *cheepy*, fledgling.

PAGE 25.

LIZZIE: *yestreen*, yestereven; *halflin-laddie*, 'prentice stripling; *a thowless shilpit quean*, an invertebrate and meagre young woman; *mim and primsy*, overnice; *pirny-taed*, turn-in-toed; *leuch*, laughed; *a place*, i.e. as a domestic servant; *kirnin'*, churning.

PAGE 31.

GLANCES: *bourtree*, the elder-bush.

PAGE 32.

THE GIPSY LASS: *thole*, endure; *tine*, lose; *twine*, part.

PAGE 39.

AT SWEET MARY'S SHRINE: *sauchs*, willows; *Ythan*, an Aberdeenshire river; *hain*, spare, hoard, save.

PAGE 45.

THE PROWS O' REEKIE: *Auld Reekie*, a name for Edinburgh; *ding*, overcome; *tine*, lose; *scrieve*, write.

PAGE 46.

THE LOST LYON: *Elshinner*, Alexander; *biggit*, built; *etins*, furies, witches; *dung*, pret. of *ding*, to smash; *stour*, dust; *Lyon*, a lion rampant is the banner of Scotland's king, the people's flag is St. Andrew's X-shaped cross, white on a blue field; *lyart*, whitish.

PAGE 52.

PORTRAIT OF MARY STUART: *bydand*, waiting; *balas braw*, beautiful rubies.

PAGE 63.

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD: *eident*, diligent, knowing; *snowk*, savour in warmth; *reek*, smoke; *but-and-ben*, a cottage of one storey with only two rooms, the doors of which face each other: *but* (sc. the house) usually signifies the working-room or kitchen, *ben* denoting the room reserved for less ordinary occasions or for more intimate or specially-honoured visitors; *steeked*, bolted; *douce auld-farrant*, comfortable old-fashioned; *pow*, head, poll; *back-end*, autumn; *wauchts*, draughts; *happit*, covered; *mools*, mould.

PAGE 106.

CLAYMORE: *byre*, cowshed.

PAGE 113.

GLEN: *dour*, stubborn.

PAGE 114.

A SONG OF LIFE AND GOLF: *stimie*, a stroke in golf impossible to play without benefiting the opponent; *gleg*, nimble, skilful; *fleeched*, pleaded; *U.P.*, then a "rival" church.

PAGE 116.

FISHER JAMIE: *blate an' canty*, bashful and winsome; *speir*, ask.

PAGE 117.

POACHING IN EXCELSIS: *pairtricks*, partridges.

PAGE 126.

THE FAIRY KNOWE: *heich*, high; *attour*, around; *hirplin'*, limping; *onkent*, unknown; *shauchlin'*, lumbering; *waukrife*, wakeful; *airt*, direction; *dwam*, swoon.

PAGE 127.

THE BACK O' HAIRST (i.e. After Harvest): *leme*, brightness; *mealoch*, particle; *hain*, spare, save; *kann*, skill; *kepit*, received.

PAGE 128.

THE WATERGAW: *watergaw*, pale rainbow; *yow-trummle*, cold weather in July causing shorn ewes to tremble.

PAGE 135.

SOMERSAULT: *stishie*, rumpus; *breenge*, hurtle; *haliket*, headlong; *gallus glower*, callous stare; *whud*, dash.

PAGE 135.

THE CAMSTAIRIE: *camstairie*, disorderly; *keek*, peep; *gey*, rather; *wheen*, small quantity; *siccan freits*, such devices; *douce*, circumspect; *crouse*, easy-going; *lippen to*, heed.

PAGE 139.

CROWDIEKNOWE: *feck*, abundance; *glower*, glare; *gar*, compel; *haud their row*, be quiet; *fegs!*, faith!; *blate*, cautious.

PAGE 149.

RAKE THE FIRE: A hymn or prayer sung to the Celtic act of superstition described.

PAGE 172.

THE SHORTER CATECHISM: *stievest*, sturdiest; *spunk*, spark; *feck*, greater part; *soom*, swim; *coupin' horse*, market business.

PAGE 174.

GIN I WAS GOD: *darg*, task; *deaved*, maddened, made impatient; *sheet*, Buchan dialect for "shoot"; *dicht*, wipe.

PAGE 174.

THE SANG O' THE SMIDDY: *airn*, iron; *gow*, blacksmith; *lowe*, flame-glow; *drouth*, toper; *lugs*, ears.

PAGE 193

TO SHEENA: *deaved*, maddened, wearied to excess.

PAGE 195.

THE ROWAN: *kye*, cattle; *warlock*, wizard; *fleggit*, affrayed; *wean*, child; *whaup*, curlew; *shilpit*, thin, weakly.

PAGE 203.

ANGUS REMEMBERS: *dreich*, wearisome, uninteresting.

PAGE 207.

THE TRYST (i.e. the appointment to meet again). In Scots the word rimes not with "mist" but with "Christ."

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